

June, 1918

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# The SMART SET

*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*



*In This Number*

James Stephens

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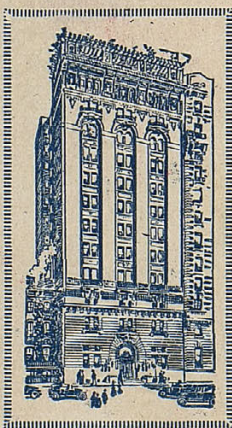
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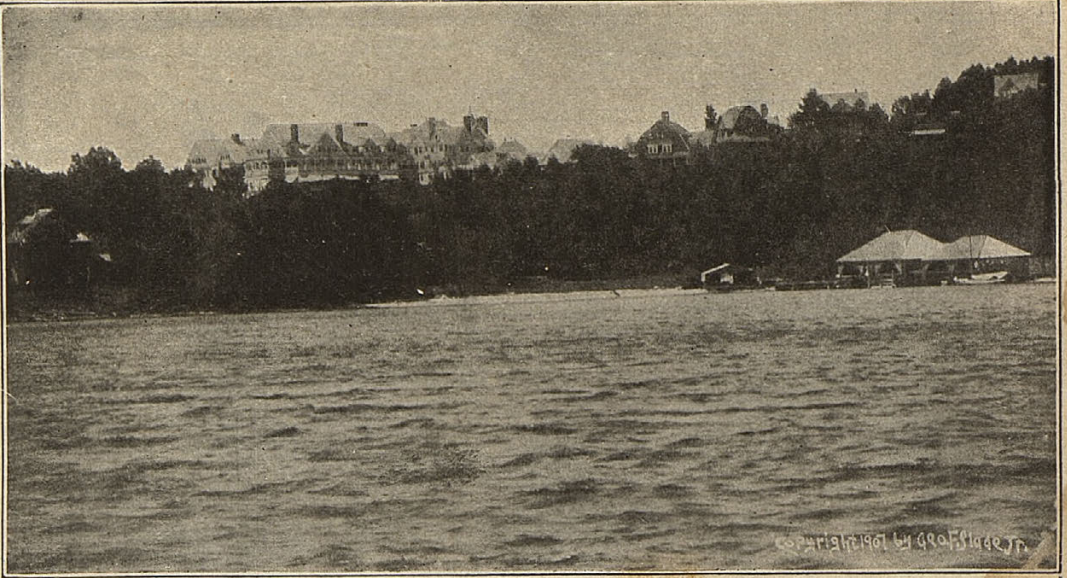


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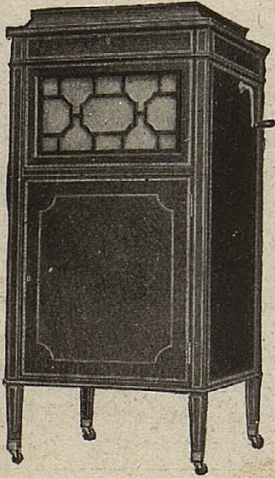
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# The SMART SET

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## BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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Issued Monthly by Smart Set Company, Inc., Printing Crafts Bldg.

Entered at New York Post Office as second class mail matter

Eltinge F. Warner, Pres. and Treas.

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"THE WHITE STREAK," by Sherwood Anderson

"SOME LADIES AND JURGEN," by James Branch Cabell

"THE INAUGURATION OF BRIDA CREEL," by Lilith Benda



Vol. LV.

JUNE, 1918

No. 2

# *The* SMART SET

*The Aristocrat of the Magazines*

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## THE NEW SONG

By Harold Cook

Of old she mused about the winds  
That pass with whisperings of leaves,  
Of little kindred in the grass  
And swallows moving in the eaves.

And she would look with wonder eyes  
Upon the bursting of a dawn,  
Or draw the curtain of the room  
To watch a moon above the lawn.

Ah, but now has Love come  
With all dawn's beauty in his eyes,  
With mysteries of things that lie  
Within the roofs of paradise.

And now her song is of his hair,  
That it is like a golden sun,  
That his arms are a little house  
After a sullen day is done.





# ON BEING IN LOVE

By John Hamilton

I KNOW how one feels who is in love.

\* \* \*

Once I was persuaded to wear a sport shirt.

Once a caterpillar crawled over my bare foot.

Once at a banquet I was called upon unexpectedly to make a speech.

Once I had a tooth pulled.

Once I applauded in church.

Once when I was a little boy I was served two ice cream sodas at once.

Once I was mistaken for an escaped convict.

Once I held a baby.

Once the house caught on fire when I was taking my bath.

Once I swore in front of a Baptist minister.

Once I stepped on a cat.

Once a waiter put salt into my demitasse instead of sugar.

Once my hot-water bag leaked while I slept.

\* \* \*

I know how one feels who is in love.



# IF HEARTS WERE STARS

By Bertha Bolling

IF hearts of mine were only stars,  
Gilding the dusk for me;  
Glowing so true, from out life's blue;  
How bright my heavens would be!

The great ones, gold and glorious,  
Shining so strong and bright;  
And all the gentle little ones  
Silvering the darkest night!

I'll name you stars, oh hearts of mine;  
Placing you high above  
All other things within my soul—  
Upon my sky of love!





# THE DEADLY PERFECTION

By Lillian Foster Barrett

## I

GEORGE FLETCHER, with that courteous ease of manner that was his most striking characteristic, passed the usher with a nod and found his way unaided to his seat. The incident, though a trivial one, was the starting point in a neighboring box, of a discussion delicately fraught with personalities. The readiness of idea pertinent to the subject proved it an old one, but not old enough to have lost its claim to interested debate.

Gordon Cowdrey had made the first comment.

"As much at home as at his club!"

Harmless enough, it would seem, but it furnished just the proper cue and in a moment the argument was on, full heat, with Mrs. Jimmy Treadwell in the lead.

"Of course, he'd *never* marry her," she claimed decisively. "Granted she's good and beautiful, but what of it? Neither constitutes of itself a claim to position."

"But they say at the club—" put in Jimmy tentatively.

"Oh! *On dit! On dit!*" cried Mrs. Jimmy.

Bert Whitelaw as host felt called upon to come to Jimmy's support.

"They do say at the club that George is willing, but the fair Gabrielle holds back," he ventured.

"Nonsense!" protested Mrs. Jimmy. "Men, *our* men, don't marry outside their own set. We're a close corporation when it comes to that."

Lili Whitelaw had been listening, waving her big fan meditatively. Lili always had a big fan which she waved meditatively; it lent just the right note

of shifting uncertainty that provoked curiosity as to what was going to happen next.

As someone once very neatly remarked—Lili coiled behind her fan. Her spring was none the less deadly for its artistic *couchment*.

But tonight she seemed a little tired; one looked in vain for her sharp sallies. Could it be the matter of this girl, Gabrielle Winton—

"What do you think of it?" Mrs. Jimmy confronted Gordon. "Would you bestow your perfectly good name on that Salamander creature you had at the Pier last summer?"

Gordon laughed at this direct treatment.

"Cleo?" he said. "Oh, that's another matter! But I shouldn't be surprised if there were something in this girl holding back. Perhaps George is willing—"

Lili leaned forward now, her blue eyes suddenly alight.

"He is," she said slowly. "He told me so himself last night—in the strictest confidence, of course. I put it down to courtesy to the girl, but, you know, I'm beginning to wonder. It may be she is cleverer than we think—"

"What do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Jimmy. "Clever *not* to marry him? With his money and name—"

Lili nodded.

"She may be in love with him," she said quietly.

Mrs. Jimmy showed her annoyance. Lili so purposely mixed one up.

Lili, in the meantime, had turned and let her eyes rest with a soft scrutiny on the face of the man under discussion.

"I wish," she said, and her voice



struck a note of intensity that was well nigh genuine, "I wish he *would* marry her."

There was a general laugh. It really was very amusing of Lili to take this stand; even her husband seemed to appreciate the nice humor of it. For, considering her confessed penchant for George, one might have expected a less unselfish attitude; but then, when it was a question of Lili, one had ceased long ago to expect anything but the unexpected.

"Bravado!" murmured Mrs. Jimmy to her husband in a tone meant to penetrate.

But Gordon Cowdrey leaned closer to Lili.

"You say that as if you meant it."

"I do," she answered seriously.

Her eyes were again upon Fletcher, and there was a certain eagerness in their depths.

"But I don't understand—" pleaded Gordon.

"The point is—" answered Lili. "When I thought of it as the usual liaison I despaired. But now—"

The man below looked up. Lili flashed him a brilliant smile.

"Now?" asked Gordon, who had watched the exchange.

"If he only *would* marry her! Ah, don't you see? There might be hope for—for others. For, after all—" She gave the suggestion of a little laugh, as the house darkened and the curtain rose. "After all, marriage is so little subtle!"

## II

It was the usual drama, styled legitimate, with the inevitable pathos and bathos side by side and the conventional rise to an emotional break in the last act. The thing could not have been endured had not Gabrielle Winton been such as to make for utter disregard of everything except her own charm of personality. Her's the greater triumph in that the vehicle of her acting was so signally crude! There was that in her rich, low voice, in her grace of line and

perfect poise that satisfied the most critical artist; there was that in her emotional acting that swayed with potency the more subtle, because it was chastened to an almost classic purity.

She was beautiful, but her spell lay not in her beauty, rather in the humanity of her. "The humanity of her!" Yes, that was it. Some critic had stumbled upon the phrase in the beginning of her career and even now, after she had run a two years' course of unprecedented success, changes were still being rung on the same expression.

Jimmy Treadwell came to the fore at the end of the first act and did what was expected of him.

"She's so—so human, isn't she?" he said, giving forth dutifully the applause necessary to the occasion.

Lili sat perfectly still. She had been watching Gabrielle with a tenseness of interest and closeness of scrutiny that allowed nothing to escape it.

"Is she?" she said at last. "A remarkable actress, certainly. But—human, do you think?" Her voice tapered to a point, gracefully suggestive.

Then, shaking her head. "No, she's too perfect! Humanity makes for flaws!"

Mrs. Jimmy didn't see it and protested with some show of incoherent logic, which Lili languidly ignored. The only answer she would vouchsafe was a shrug and a murmured "*Mon Dieu!*" "The deadliness of perfection!"

Mrs. Jimmy clinched the matter at that to her way of thinking.

"You're not consistent, Lili," she said with fine scorn and deliberately turned her back.

"But why be consistent when you can be charming?" interpolated Gordon.

"Thank you!" whispered Lili with a sweet look of grateful understanding. "The thing in a nutshell! She—" indicating the stage that was just being disclosed for the second act, "*is* consistent; she would be, always. And so—what could she know of real love?"

"But—" and here Lili again sighed deeply as her eyes rested on Gabrielle,



who had just made her entrance. "She is beautiful!"

### III

GEORGE FLETCHER had lived the usual life of the average New York society man up to the age of thirty-five—this in spite of an equipment of idea and expectation very different from the average. For Fletcher had started out with the preconceived idea of life as a thing that gripped and held, a thing of perpetual dilemmas and passionate problems. He had wanted, intensely wanted, it to be that way, so that he might try out the mettle of him in the furnace of seething event.

The almost unctuous ease of his first few years out of college had brought a questioning surprise that deepened to disappointment as time went blandly on; nothing really worth while ever happened, and there gradually settled the conviction that nothing really worth while ever would. He traveled extensively, loved indifferently, and in the end became infinitely bored. Life seemed to offer so little that was really genuine.

Was it, Fletcher often asked himself, that the very tradition of what his class stood for precluded the elemental force necessary to drive life into a corner, to front deliberately its essential facts? Or was it there *were* no essential facts of life? That what loomed large, as of fundamental importance, on the horizon of the future, assumed petty proportions when met in the present?

His first love affair! He smiled always as he recalled it. He had expected glorious reality, frank freedom. It resolved itself merely into a gossamer interplay of artifice and deft avoidance of anything approaching real passion. The thing that stood out most clearly in his mind, after the matter was ended, was the daintiness and variety of the lady's negligés. This, the gauge of an emotion he had expected to grip him with all the immensity and intensity of love as a full experience!

The pendulum had swung to the opposite extreme with the result of a second affair, that with a woman of the coarsest grain. He hated it. He weighed crude lack of finesse against the inadequacy of artificiality and despaired of compromise. The tragedy of Fletcher's problem was that, born with perhaps a larger share than usual of elemental cravings, he was still too much the æsthetic by training and education to tolerate an experience, the primordial force of which precluded beauty and form. He wanted nature, nature refined without being devitalized.

He had wanted to marry always, and had started out at an early age with that end in view. His quest for the right woman had ended in disillusion, to the setting in of an apathy that came to take for granted the hopelessness and futility of the sex question in general, of his own in particular.

Lili Whitelaw had interested him through her delightful inconsequence. She had a tricky intelligence and sparkling wit that were more or less refreshing, considering the number of women who had neither. She was pretty with a charming prettiness that frankly confessed to the artifices of a maid. Artifice! That was the keynote to Lili's nature, but she carried her artificiality with such a graceful ease that it verged surprisingly near the most ingenuous naturalness.

Fletcher's flirtation with Lili might have followed the usual line of least resistance had it not been for the arrival of Gabrielle Winton. The appearance of the young English star in the New York firmament was well timed—that is, as far as Fletcher was concerned. For, it would seem that Lili had paved the way, as it were, for the new arrival by a very contrast of values. In her artificial frivolity she proved a most excellent foil for the more substantial qualities of Gabrielle.

Fletcher and Lili had run to delicate inuendoes, charming, provocative, illusive; it was with a keener sense of relief, therefore, that he turned to a real



friendship, built on a sound basis of understanding and sympathy and that showed promise of even deeper development.

He had met Gabrielle Winton at a dinner soon after her arrival in this country. It was the usual dinner at the usual Fifth Avenue restaurant, financed by some man of wealth in the interest of a fair one of the footlights. It was different only in that Gabrielle, though merely one of the guests of the occasion, seemed to control the morale of the party with the result of a brilliancy that never erred to vulgarity or offended in the slightest way the rules of good taste. Fletcher enjoyed the dinner more than any other he could recall and determined to see more of the woman who, in spite of overwhelming odds, had so set the tone of it.

The next night he went to see the play in which she was acting, and at the end of the performance found himself in the grip of the passion he had been waiting for all his life, a passion so intense there was left no doubt at all in his mind as to the eventual outcome of it.

Gabrielle must be his wife. She possessed that rare combination of qualities he had long been seeking. She was elemental in her emotions, but of a finished personality that was yet not art but nature. She seemed the more precious find in that she had come to him after he had long since despaired of any experience worth while. Be it said for the purity of the emotion Gabrielle inspired, that Fletcher never for an instant thought of offering anything less than marriage. That Gabrielle could take her place in his own set gracefully and without question he did not doubt; it was only what she might think of the superficiality of that set that brought him pause.

Gabrielle's opposition to his proposal of marriage came not as a surprise; the value of a thing is sometimes measured by the difficulties involved in acquiring it. It was to Gabrielle's credit that she hesitated; the eventual yielding would be the sweeter. So he awaited in all

good faith the moment that would see the fruition of his plans and the consummation of his dearest hopes.

It wasn't until his talk with Lili the night before the theatre party that he came to realize that his attentions to Gabrielle might be misconstrued to the jeopardizing of her good name. He saw now that the very openness of his devotion, that he had always considered a guarantee of square dealing, was being interpreted simply as reckless defiance of opinion. The matter as presented in that light startled him; definite action must be taken at once.

Lili had said nothing directly; she implied much. Lili could always imply things with a sophisticated *naïveté*, the very intangibility of her implication precluding any counter attack.

Her confidential "Why don't you marry her, George?" had cast a reflection on Gabrielle, that Fletcher had hastened to combat with "But I have asked her a hundred times and she has refused!"

Lili had raised her brows with delicate incredulity, but in no way altered her original hypothesis that opposition on the girl's part was absurd, the question resolving itself entirely in the last analysis into one of George's condescension.

"I must go to see her," Lili had announced finally. "No I never have. What's the theatre?"

The tone might have implied the consideration of a new Pekinese or race horse, with the possible view of a purchase in mind.

Fletcher was angry, still more so when he realized Lili had provoked him into an actual apology for the poor production Gabrielle was playing in. He cut himself short and rose to go.

"To get away from the red tape of Broadway would be a relief for any decent woman," Lili had finally announced with a show of virtuous indignation at the wrongs inflicted upon her sisters of the footlights.

"But she doesn't want to get away—" Fletcher started to protest almost angrily.



Then, seeing his mistake:

"Go to see her, Lili," he said. "She's beautiful, very beautiful and good."

"Tomorrow night!" Lili had murmured as they parted.

It was with a feeling of irritability, however, that Fletcher recognized the box party that next night. He had thought during the day that he himself would not go to the theater as had been his custom nightly ever since Gabrielle's new show had opened. Then, realizing his failure to appear might be deemed in the nature of a concession to Lili and her curiosity, he decided to go as usual. It was not that he feared Gabrielle would fail to qualify; it was, rather, that it seemed a sacrilege to have the beauty and purity of the woman he loved submitted to the criticism of a set of worldings, incapable of appreciation of sterling worth.

It seemed to Fletcher as the evening advanced that Gabrielle had never before given a more perfect performance. He lost all consciousness of Lili and her party, of the people about him, of the stage, and gave himself to the potent spell of this woman he desired so intensely to make his own.

He breathed a deep sigh as the curtain went down on the last act, shutting her so blackly from his vision. The lights brought reality. One glance at the gay party leaving the box and the determination was forged grimly to force an issue with Gabrielle that night.

"This way—she belongs to everybody," he murmured, forced to listen to the general comment on the way out.

As he came out into the lobby, still in a daze of emotion and conflicting thoughts, he encountered Lili's party. There was a moment of embarrassed uncertainty.

"Jolly performance!" said Bert Whitelaw with happy selection of adjective.

"Miss Winton is charming!" pronounced Mrs. Jimmy with condescension.

Fletcher's eyes sought Lili's in spite of himself.

"A perfect actress!" she said.

That was all, but the phrase haunted. It seemed somehow but a strange echo of his own thought of a minute before.

"This way—she belongs to everybody."

#### IV

GABRIELLE WINTON came of a family the theatrical success of which had long been a tradition in England. Gabrielle's father had been, perhaps, the greatest of the Wintons in that he had been actuated in his career purely by the desire of promulgating the best in his art, and of bringing about a higher standard of drama. He had died at an early age leaving his mission unfulfilled, but with the confident hope that his daughter would carry it on to success.

Gabrielle had been trained from childhood for the stage; no other alternative had ever presented itself. At her father's death she took up the responsibility that he had laid down with a full sense of the seriousness of it.

Her career had been tragic, in that little by little she had been obliged to sacrifice her father's principles and ideals of art to the demands of her managers. She had started out to play the classic drama; from brute force of necessity she was condemned to the rankest of melodramas.

Her beauty and charm were a handicap, as, in theatrical circles, beauty and charm invariably are unless commercialized. But she clung to her moral principles, not suffering them to be battered down as had been her dramatic ideals, and continued to struggle on until by dint of her real worth as an emotional actress success had become hers. That is, the success that means crowded houses and flaunts itself on lurid billboards, success which Gabrielle accounted no success at all.

She soon sickened of the éclat of her so-called London triumphs, for those triumphs seemed always a painful reminder of the tenets she had sacrificed in the achieving of her notoriety.



After the death of her mother, she came to America with the object of beginning over again in a new field. Her fame had preceded her, of course; the New York managers laughed when she talked of changing her line. The result was inevitable; it was impossible to hold out against these men who lived and dreamed and had their being entirely in terms of box office receipts. To yield seemed less a sacrilege of her ideals than to try to bring those ideals down to the level of their little understanding.

So Gabrielle continued in her old order of rôle with the result of her immediate success on Broadway. It would have been better for her, perhaps, had she been obliged to win it more hardly, for she was of a nature that enjoyed a struggle against odds. Better a struggle for something than the easy conquest of it, no matter how worthless the thing intrinsically! If the end must be a worthless one, at least let there be a certain stimulation involved in the effort to achieve it.

Thus it was her easy triumph bored her. The people with whom she came in contact offered no inspiration and she soon resigned herself to a state of restless discontent.

She, too, had often thought of marriage and considered it the only happy solution of every woman's existence. But the men who seek out the popular actress are not of the type to meet the demands of a woman like Gabrielle. She looked for understanding; she found only a superficial sex interest.

George Fletcher was the first man to come into her life who measured to her standard. She recognized at once his fineness of fibre, the ready intelligence, the quick sympathy. She recognized also that she stood in his eyes as an individual embodiment of an ideal rather than as merely a pretty woman to dally with. The relation seemed rich in promise; Gabrielle gave herself up to the full experience of it with a sense of restful security as of a long sought goal at last attained.

At the end of a year, however, though

gauging the just measure of their friendship, that was the stronger for a certain slowness necessary to natural development, she realized with a protest that the essential spark that makes for love as it should exist between a man and a woman had not been kindled. Why?

The question haunted continually. It was not because of any disparity of ideas or lack of identification of interests. It was not because Fletcher had failed to satisfy her every demand of what a man should be. It was, in short, nothing she could bring down to definite analysis. It was rather a vague intangible feeling, instinct perhaps, that the difference in their stations precluded that intimate association, that giving of self without reservation, of which only could passion, in a nature like Gabrielle's, be begotten.

There is necessarily and always an antagonism of class, and those misclassified are more truly the victims of it. This was true of Gabrielle. Knowing herself, and with no degree of conceit, finer than the women of Fletcher's own set, yet, perforce accident of circumstance, placed without, she fought down any impulse that might argue a yielding of ground to the traditions of that set. It was, so to speak, a sort of inverted snobbery, and Fletcher was the unfortunate victim. She had refused his first proposal on the grounds of her career. He had taken it gently, courteously, though with an indication that the subject was not definitely closed.

Six months later he renewed the offer; this time she told him she did not love him.

"But why?" he protested. "We are out to love each other."

"Yes, I know," she admitted. "I want to love you, to marry you. It would be quite the happiest solution for me—"

"I might undertake to alter myself, even radically—" he persisted.

But she shook her head. "The fault isn't with you. It's—well, honestly, I don't know."



She turned her deep eyes full upon him and he could read the struggle and uncertainty in their shadows.

"It's—it's tragic," she faltered.

Then they smiled into each other's eyes with one of their quick appreciations of a situation truly absurd.

"No more of it, tonight." She had said lightly, and the subject had been dropped.

Not the least evidence of what Fletcher's love of Gabrielle had done for him was his steady optimism in the face of discouragement, an optimism that worked to the conviction that everything *had* to come out all right. His love was too big and beautiful a thing to be denied fruition. Time only was necessary to bring about the desired end.

His talk with Lili had been the first disturbing element. Her covert sneer at Gabrielle had hurt the more in that it was so unjustifiable. It succeeded, however, in leaving its taint, in arousing in Fletcher's mind a bitter resentment that the woman he loved so much should be in a position not only to suffer the dictates of intriguing managers but also that she should be obliged to expose herself to the general criticism of the crowd to which she presented herself each night.

He had never thought of the matter in this light before. Gabrielle's art he had taken as an essential part of her and had thrilled night after night to her glorious acting. If he had realized her spell was for others, too, as well as for himself, he would, doubtless, have set it down, without a tinge of jealousy, entirely to the broad humanity she represented. As absurd to be jealous of Gabrielle that way as of the summer moon or a gorgeous winter sunset!

Yet, this particular night, with Lili and her party there in the box—Jimmy Treadwell and the dissolute Gordon Cowdrey—things assumed a different aspect. That Gabrielle should be giving herself to these was humiliating, the more so that the play, the vehicle through which she was forced to ex-

press herself, was so unquestionably cheap.

But Gabrielle, as we have said, had never before done herself greater justice in her acting, and all Fletcher's little doubts and petty irritations were soon dispelled in the wonder of her beauty as he gazed upon her. Each time, however, that he was shut away from her by the long sweep of the curtain, his general uneasiness returned.

Lili's very pointed remark, "A perfect actress," had seemed the last humiliation. For who was Lili to criticize one way or the other, to pass judgment, to—

Fletcher was forced to wait some time for Gabrielle.

"Another altercation with the manager," she had explained, sighing slightly as in surrender to fatigue.

Once ensconced in the motor, Fletcher let all the emotion that had been pent in his being for so long rush forth in a great plea. It was all so different from the carefully calculated precision of his other avowals.

He made her see the more vividly for the very incoherence of his words the greatness of this love she had kindled in him, the import of it in the moulding of his Destiny.

"I love you. I love you so," he kept reiterating till Gabrielle felt herself stirred whether from sheer contact with the force of his passion or from an emotion born in her own heart, she did not know.

He saw that she was trembling and read for the first time hope in her hesitancy. He quieted himself a little.

"Ah, Gabrielle! I want to take you out of all this. I want you for myself. This way, you are exposed to worry, forced to bicker with your managers. You—you belong to everybody, everybody who pays his price of admission."

Their eyes met, and in a second Fletcher realized he had erred, had lost the hard-earned advantage of the moment previous. What was it? The warmth in her eyes had faded, that warmth in which he had read her yielding.



She stiffened a little and turned away. "We are here," she said quietly, as the motor slowed down at Sherry's.

But even as Fletcher was protesting and struggling to grasp the inexplicable something that had come between them, they had stepped out of the machine and were being obsequiously escorted by the lackey to the door.

"We can finish the discussion inside," Gabrielle had said.

Once inside, however, it was very difficult to pick up the threads of the scene enacted in the close warmth of the limousine. They touched the casual for a few minutes with a variety of comment in regard to the people at the neighboring tables.

Then, with Fletcher's last words in the motor clearly the point of departure, Gabrielle said as she met his eyes unflinchingly:

"Lili Whitelaw is very beautiful."

"How did you recognize her?" asked Fletcher.

"I've seen her about—at the Opera, in restaurants. Besides, her picture is constantly in the papers—"

There was a pause.

Fletcher leaned forward with a sudden impulse.

"Do you know what they're saying, Gabrielle? What—"

"Then you *have* talked me over with her."

The words were said with a crisp incisiveness, as if in corroboration of a doubt that had for some time been troubling. It was, somehow, in the nature of an admission that startled Gabrielle herself as well as Fletcher. It was the first time she had given evidence of realizing he had any existence apart from that he shared with her.

Gabrielle's eyes showed strange depths as Fletcher looked into them in a hesitancy, prompted by surprise rather than indecision, as to his answer.

"Well, yes," he said. "Lili herself dragged the subject in last night."

"Oh!" was her only answer. But the vibration of the low voice, tense with an emotion curbed up short, brought to

Fletcher, lightning-like, insight into the real nature of Gabrielle's lack of response to his love. He had acted on his intuition before he realized it.

"So *that's* it!" he had said. "You will not marry me, you cannot love me, because there's—there's that—"

Both realized as they hung mute for a second, probing each other's eyes, that they were about to face at last the vital point of the issue, that subterfuge and evasion must needs give way at the present crisis to the honest desire to get at the real truth of the situation.

"What?" Gabrielle had barely articulated.

"Because there's that inexplicable, intangible something of class that holds us apart, an innate jealousy, a pride that will not yield. Oh! I cannot explain it. Another woman would have taken me for what I could give her. *You* would take me in honestly, only, and you cannot honestly love me, Gabrielle—don't you see? Marry me, and that antagonism of class will be overcome. You and I together, living the same life, all that would be obliterated then. You could grow to love me, as, this way, you never could. Gabrielle, you will never find another man to offer you as big, as perfect a love as I offer you. I have lived my whole life in preparation of this."

Gabrielle listened with wide, tense eyes. The realization that Fletcher had grasped the truth that had so long eluded her brought in its trail a quick resentment, the keener in that she knew it as unjustifiable. He was right; it was a class antagonism that kept her from giving in, but that antagonism was in no way lessened by the fact that it had been brought to open discussion.

"You mean," she said, and her mellow voice seemed to harden in its very attempt to be natural, "You mean you think I'm afraid that I wouldn't qualify in *your* set."

Fletcher's brows contracted quickly.

"Gabrielle!" he cried, and there was genuine pain in his voice.

She did not need his protest to teach



her the pettiness of the remark, but once started, she clung to her viewpoint.

"Well—what else?" she persisted.

He covered his disappointment, but she felt it notwithstanding.

"You know you would qualify, as I know you would qualify. I was taking the subject generally—"

"And I was crude enough to make particular application—" She put in with no attempt to conceal the bitterness in her tone.

Fletcher sighed. "After all, it is the way of women, and you, Gabrielle, are so essentially a woman—" He smiled a little. "I want you to be that way—little weaknesses and all—"

She ignored his endeavor to strike a lighter vein.

"Well, she said at last. "I'm not afraid. I *would* qualify. Put me side of Lili Whitelaw—"

Again Fletcher frowned. "As I said before, there's no doubt in my mind—"

"If there is in others?" she finished quickly.

"I wasn't going to say that," he said decisively. "Gabrielle, what is the matter? You are different tonight."

But she was thinking deeply and did not hear him.

"I would almost marry you," she said at last, "to prove to those others—Lili Whitelaw and the rest of that box party that came to look me over so insolently—to prove to them I *could* stand the test, that I *could*—"

Her voice broke and tears came to her eyes as she realized the absurdity of her bravado.

"I want to go home," she said and rose hurriedly.

In the motor Fletcher took her in his arms. It was the first time. He had dreamed of this happening so many times, wanted it so often; now that it had come there seemed an irony involved in that he must needs force himself to look upon her as he would look upon a child to be comforted. He held her quietly as she cried out her weakness on his shoulder.

"I am tired, so tired!" she said wear-

ily at last as she roused herself. "That is my only excuse."

That was all. As she said good-night at the door she faltered, as if with a tremulous desire to touch again the subject so vital to them both.

"In a month," she had said and the words seemed to cost her an effort she was hardly capable of. "In a month we will talk it over again."

"For the last time!" he had put in quickly.

Their eyes met, a certain pain in hers, decision in his.

"I owe that at least to myself, don't you think so?" he added kindly.

"Yes," she admitted weakly. "Yes." Then, as if feeling something more were expected of her, she smiled up at him wanly as she said. "I feel as if I had been playing the heavy rôle in a melodrama."

He laughed as he pressed her hand. Then she left him.

## V

As Fletcher looked back upon the scene that night with Gabrielle, his first slight disappointment that she had narrowed things down to a personal basis gave way to a great tenderness for her just because she had done so. That feminine unreason, provoked by jealousy, showed a phase of her that, as his mind dwelt upon it, came to hold for him a strange lure that her days of poise and perfect dignity had never held. She had given way to her tears so artlessly; she had accepted his comfort so simply. It was all just a part of that great naturalness of hers that would not compromise with pretense. She had been weak, but had not shrunk from confessing her weakness. She was, in this new guise, so essentially the woman to be loved, protected, caressed. The appeal was a physical one, perhaps, but none the less potent for that.

He thought of the words that seemed to have come from her almost without her own consciousness of them. "I would marry you to prove to the others I could stand the test." This brought



him reflection; it had so showed the accuracy of his gauge of that class feeling he must set about to overcome.

To have clearly defined what it is one has to combat makes for a certain confidence that has much to do with bringing about the ultimate victory. So it was with Fletcher; he set about the task, as presented to him in the light of his new reading of Gabrielle's character, with a feeling of relief, as of one who, having struggled blindly on in the dark finds himself at last in the open with the goal in sight.

With Gabrielle it was quite different. The recognition of the truth of what Fletcher had said had strangely complicated her problem. All her life she had been involved in one struggle or another, but always it was she herself against some outside force. As in the case of her managers it was her force against theirs. That she had been beaten, been obliged to sacrifice her tenets to theirs had cost her sorrow. But she had had always the consciousness that she had fought a good fight, and satisfaction in the wholeness of her purpose.

She faced the present crisis with a feeling of terror because she realized the warring elements were within herself. On the one hand, there was her pride that forbade absolutely her yielding. On the other, was weak uncertainty, together with a foolish bravado that accounted marriage itself as the nicest kind of defiance. But back of it all, there was another mood waiting to be dealt with, a mood of immense despair, despair that the thing she wanted so intensely had come at last, but come so trailed with other complications she was afraid to meet it.

Fletcher, as he had poured forth chaotically his appeal to her, had stirred her as in his former deferential love-making he had failed to do. Her sudden startling realization of this had reduced her to a panic; the tears had been the inevitable result. And, odd as it would seem, though harbouring bitterly resentment against him for his open discussion of class, she knew that

above everything else she had wanted him to kiss her as he held her close.

The day after the scene at Sherry's, Gabrielle had received a note from Fletcher, stating that he was going away on business and would not return for several weeks. She took from the note just what she was intended to. Fletcher wished to free her of his presence as much as possible during the period in which she was making up her mind. It was his way of playing fair; Gabrielle would have preferred, perhaps, to have had him less scrupulous. The problem loomed the bigger in the abstract.

A note from Helen Stewart, Fletcher's sister, received a few days later, rendered the situation still more complicated. Gabrielle recognized Fletcher's hand in the matter. It was his way of tacitly expressing the confidence he had in her that she would qualify anywhere. He was giving her the opportunity of demonstrating her fitness to move in any circle.

Helen Stewart stood for the best of New York Society. Her set was the ultra conservative one that still held to the old traditions of stern morality and fine breeding. She herself was the whole souled type of woman whose sphere is distinctly the home. Married at an early age, she had consciously limited her interests. Her husband Phil, her children five and her brother George—these made up her life.

Her deepest regret had been that George had not proved amenable to matrimonial suggestions; many a well-laid scheme and systematic campaign she had been obliged to forego in face of his persistent obduracy. She had watched him drift to the fast set and then drift with it for years, but she had said nothing.

The rumor of his attachment to a denizen of the footlights, however, had brought a dismay that had threatened to become panicky. The silence was broken, with the result of a comfortable talk between brother and sister that had quite restored their old-time attitude of intimacy and confidence.



Helen from that time on followed the matter with interest.

"The girl is perfectly good, of fine breeding. So why not?" she had announced positively to her husband afterwards. "Better that than flirting with women like Lili Whitelaw!"

Gabrielle's refusal of Fletcher when he duly offered himself had brought an amazed resentment to Helen, which merged later on to a tender gratitude.

"The girl, doubtless, is doing it for his sake," she had decided. "Thinks we object. I wish I could do something in the matter—"

So it was that Helen was ready to act immediately when Fletcher suggested that she ask Gabrielle to tea. The note was couched in terms that made either acceptance or refusal gracefully possible. For Helen, though wishing genuinely to help, wanted in no way to put the girl in an embarrassing position or to force an issue.

"If she comes because she wants to, then we'll be better friends," she had concluded.

Gabrielle wished, however, as she weighed the matter in her mind, that the note had been less skilfully worded; she would like to have felt refusal impossible. For the idea of going voluntarily seemed to argue a concession to Fletcher's suit that she was not at all prepared to make. On the other hand, not to go would be in the nature of a concession, too, a concession to the class the Fletchers and Stewarts represented.

To go and steer midchannel seemed in the end the most expedient.

This consciousness of what she was to do, quite foreign to her open nature and simple method of procedure, caused Gabrielle to adopt in her meeting with Helen a reserve most unnatural to her, although it in no way obscured her charm. The effect produced was that of a part perfectly played. The contralto voice was as mellow and rich as usual, the grace of bearing as lovely, the manner as finished.

What was it then, Helen kept asking

herself, that failed to convince? Was it that Gabrielle failed of spontaneity? Was it— But it was hardly fair to judge. The finer the girl's grain, the more keenly must she feel the ordeal of this meeting. At any rate, her gentility was beyond question, her beauty a joy; all in all, Helen was pleased and was already formulating in her mind the very words with which she could express her approval to George.

Twenty minutes after Gabrielle had arrived, Lili Whitelaw was announced. Lili was a distant relative of Phil's, but she and Helen had very sensibly made no pretense of keeping up even a casual acquaintance.

Lili breezed into the drawing-room, however, quite without explanation, and greeted her hostess with affectionate effusion.

Helen showed herself very much at sea. It was only when Lili turned to Gabrielle with her delicate brows arched questioningly that she got the full force of the manoeuvre. Lili had tricked this meeting.

"Ah, Miss Winton! It can't be, really. What a happy surprise! I had no idea—"

Her eyes met Helen's and she smiled.

Part of Lili's efficiency lay in the fact that, caught by anyone in a lie or an intrigue, she could, by an all-embracing smile of understanding, make of that person a partisan in her guilt.

So now with Helen. She seemed in spite of herself enrolled on the side of this scheming woman against her guest, who seemed at once to realize her disadvantage as she rose and faced them. It was, to all appearances, so unfairly two to one.

"Mrs. Whitelaw!" murmured Helen, and Gabrielle bent her head gracefully in recognition of the introduction.

There was a pause, during which the two women looked steadily into each other's eyes.

Then Lili broke the silence with a deep sigh.

"Ah!" she cried. "I love you just that way. You don't mind my saying it? It's just that pose that stayed with



me the other night after the play. It's—it's wonderful!"

Gabrielle drew herself up in all dignity. There was genuine pain in her eyes as she hesitated just how to meet this thrust.

Helen rushed in, in an attempt to cover the situation decently.

"But Miss Winton's poses are so natural," she said.

Gabrielle had recovered herself now and smiled at Helen's blunder.

Lili showed herself with a certain puzzled expression in her blue eyes.

"But I don't understand. You mean you don't like people to admire you?" she asked with innocent wonder.

Gabrielle met this with "I mean I consider myself perfectly natural, off the stage as on," and then hated herself for the stiff banality of it.

"Oh!" was Lili's only comment. Then, after a moment's reflection, "You will forgive my outburst then. It's because I'm natural, too, that I spoke right out. I have admired you so much and thought if I told you so it would at once—oh, don't you see?—put you at your ease."

Gabrielle made no attempt to conceal her annoyance this time.

"Put me at my ease?" she said, and her words gained force from the restraint she put upon her rich voice. "But why shouldn't I be at my ease always? Here? Anywhere?"

Lili evaded this. Shaking her head, she murmured sadly:

"I have blundered again, I am afraid."

Gabrielle rose and turned to Helen to make her adieux. Helen showed herself plainly ill at ease at the turn affairs had taken, with the result that her over-cordial invitation to come again rang false.

Lili refused to be left out. She had risen, too, and with a supreme effort that was positively heroic in its attempt to sound the note of fair and square dealing, she said.

"Miss Winton, in some way I have offended you. I can only ask that you forgive my crudeness. Will you?"

"Of course!" said Gabrielle.

Lili put out her hand. "To show you really meant it, will you let me come to tea with you some day?"

It was a challenge that Gabrielle could not help but take.

"Set your own time," she had said.

The two left together, as Lili was obliged to run on somewhere for bridge.

"Can I take you home in my motor?" she had queried sweetly as they went down the stairs.

"No, thank you. I have my own," answered Gabrielle and then reddened as her car, conspicuous for its lines and luxury, drew up before the curb. She would have preferred open accusation on the part of Lili to the delicate suggestion implied in her attitude as she scanned the outfit with the obvious view of appraising its value. Gabrielle could with difficulty bring herself to the point of murmuring a polite good-bye.

Lili watched the footman in all deference open the door and help Gabrielle settle herself comfortably. Then with a mocking smile in her blue eyes, she waved her hand lightly.

"Adieu!" she cried and turned smilingly away.

## VI

Helen's note to her brother was not so easy a matter as she had anticipated. She wanted so much to be honest; they had agreed to be honest. She hated to worry him, however, with an account of Mrs. Whitelaw's intrusion. It had been an intrusion, but, apart from the impoliteness involved, had no particular bearing on the matter in hand. For, after all, who was Lili, to count one way or another?

She compromised in the end by omitting entirely the Lili incident but by going into greater details as to Gabrielle. That her praise might ring the truest, she qualified it in a postscript.

"The only possible criticism that could be made, George dear, is that she



is not quite natural, gives, rather, the impression of forever playing a rôle."

## VII

A WEEK later, Lili by her own arrangement took tea with Gabrielle. She insisted upon looking about with naive delight at everything in the well-appointed room, making no excuse whatever for her curiosity. Her interest in the neat little maid who served passed all bounds; so absorbed was she in her every move she quite lost the thread of the conversation. Her apology was innocently frank.

"But you can't know the relief of getting into a *different* atmosphere," she had explained.

She drank three cups of tea with the relish of a child who tastes for the first time the pink lemonade of circus tents.

Gabrielle was faintly amused. It was perfectly good tea; of tea at least she knew herself a connoisseur. So Lili's extravagant praise failed of its purpose there.

By the time she was ready to leave, however, Lili had managed to convey to her hostess just what she wished to convey—that the afternoon had been delightful in that it had been an *experience*. Exactly the attitude I would have taken in regard to doing Chinatown or the Bowery!

Gabrielle smiled vaguely when it was all over and continued to look fixedly into the fire. What *was* Lili's game? It came back every time to that. She felt tired, irritable; Lili had accomplished that, at any rate.

Of one thing Gabrielle was certain, the end Lili had in view, however puzzling the means by which she meant to bring that end about. She was in love with George and meant to prevent his marriage; that much was clear. To that end, she had tried to belittle Gabrielle at every turn, tried, by emphasizing the difference in atmosphere, to fan the class antagonism she had in the beginning sensed in Gabrielle's nature.

Yet again, could it be Lili was one

of those who thought George the reluctant one? And had she come to laugh, mockingly, as only she could laugh?

Two other times Gabrielle saw Lili. Once they met after a matinee accidentally and went to the Ritz to tea. The following week Gabrielle had gone to Lili's for luncheon. The results of these meetings were signal in the shaping of Gabrielle's final decision. She came away bewildered, angry, revengeful. But the more she hated Lili with her tricky scheming and false flattery, the more she found herself turning to the thought of Fletcher with a great tenderness for his bigness and frankness of dealing. It seemed as if she had needed just the sort of uncertainty and distrust Lili had succeeded in arousing in her to make her appreciate the breadth of understanding and unswerving devotion that Fletcher had always given her.

All the petty opposition she had felt toward him seemed incomprehensible now that it was merged in a great longing for his return.

"You and I living the same life together—"

His words came back to her; that was what she needed, what she wanted.

She was lonely, tired of struggling by herself. She wanted to rest in the love of this man, the full beauty of whose love she might never have understood, had it not been for the opposition of another woman.

Yes, she would marry Fletcher, prove to Lili Whitelaw— But what difference did it make what she proved to Lili, now that she had come into the true recognition of the thing that would make always for her happiness?

She received a note from Fletcher, stating the day of his return. She was in a fever of excitement as she waited for him, although the outward calm of her belied the tumult of her emotions. She was standing by the fireplace as he came into the room. She made no move to go to him, but he read her message in the light of her eyes. They stood so a full minute as if the consum-



mation of their happiness were too great to be taken without an intensity of preparation. Then Fletcher put out his arms and Gabrielle with a sharp intake of her breath came to him.

### VIII

It was arranged that the marriage was to take place in about a fortnight, and was to be followed by an extended tour in Europe. The trip had been Gabrielle's suggestion, one that Fletcher had welcomed eagerly. New York seemed to hold too much that was problematic for the spring of the year. Besides, each wanted a certain length of time, unhampered by social obligations, in which to learn, in so far as was possible, the other. There was a general calm about it that argued well for future understanding. The two met day by day, talked and enjoyed the little details of arrangement the more keenly because they were shared with no one. Even Helen had not been taken into confidence.

What had taken place during Fletcher's three weeks' absence he had never asked; the results had been so much to his satisfaction that he had omitted to look into the means that had brought them about. He had never opened the subject with either Gabrielle or Helen. Gabrielle's sudden yielding seemed the more precious in that it was surrounded by a certain mystery; their marriage seemed the more sacred in that the secret of it was not to be shared.

The night before it was to take place, Fletcher was sitting in his library, disposing of some business matters, when his man announced that a lady wished to see him. His first thought was Gabrielle, with surprise that she should venture there and a slight annoyance. Something very urgent must have prompted, of course.

"Gabrielle!" he said as he saw a slight figure in the doorway, and started forward with outstretched hands.

A light laugh brought him up short.

"Oh, Lili!" he exclaimed. "I beg

your pardon—in the dim light— Won't you sit down?"

She dropped into the corner of a divan, her sable cloak a dusky background for her golden hair.

"Don't apologize," she said. "Naturally, the night before your wedding—" She smiled up at him.

He drew a chair by the divan.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" he asked, and gave the lighting of his cigarette elaborate care.

Then—

"How did you know?" he asked quietly.

Lili wrinkled her brows into a semblance of thought.

"Helen!" she brought out at last.

Fletcher shook his head.

"Well, Gabrielle herself then!" she said with a tinge of defiance in her tone.

Fletcher looked at her coolly. "You—"

"Go on!" she said.

Her mention of Gabrielle had had the desired effect; Fletcher was obviously annoyed.

"You are lying," he said and then smiled to break the effect of his words.

"Are you advancing that as a new discovery, George!" she asked sweetly, "or talking platitudes to kill time?"

He let this go. "But tell me, really—" he persisted.

"Very well, to satisfy your curiosity," she said magnanimously. "I saw your car outside the shipping office and took occasion to inquire later—"

She looked to him for appreciation of her strategy, and found it in the amusement in his eyes.

"Ah! Now we're getting down to it," he said. "And you very thoughtfully came tonight to wish me happiness, tender a little advice possibly."

They smiled at each other. It was surprising how much ground Lili could cover in a short time.

"Ah! do get a more comfortable chair," she pleaded at last. "It gives me a mental backache to talk to you like that—that's better."

Fletcher drew up a big chair and



settled himself comfortably. After all, why not? He owed it to himself to stalk Lili's game, whatever it might be. And besides, Lili did amuse. She keyed one up.

"Won't you take off your coat?" he asked as an after-thought. "No? It is too good a background to sacrifice—"

Lili flashed him a smile, then settled to an inconsistent seriousness.

"I came tonight to justify myself—in your eyes," she began very prettily.

Fletcher laughed his appreciation of this as a sally.

"You came to justify yourself for coming? Is that it? You can make a convincing argument of it, if any one can, Lili."

She shook her head sadly.

"I am serious for once, George. I want to justify myself as a woman who—who—"

He got what she was about to say from the winsome tenderness in her blue eyes.

He waved his hand as she hesitated.

"Let that go, Lili," he protested.

"No," she said and managed to strike a note full sombre with resignation. "As a woman who has loved you and has had the courage to give you to someone else, for your own good."

Fletcher looked at her shrewdly. "I don't follow," he said.

Lili met this heroically.

"George," she said slowly and deliberately, "I brought about this marriage."

Fletcher got at once the fact there was something underneath it all, but, considering his own vagueness as to what that something was, decided in favor of flippancy.

"Did you really?" he asked gaily.

"Why, thank you so much."

"I told Gabrielle—" Lili went on.

He sat up straight at that.

"You've seen her?" he asked.

"Of course. Didn't she tell you? We've been running around together quite a bit since you went away. She had an idea, I think, which I encouraged for your sake, that I was trying to prevent the marriage, and so with

true woman's perversity determined to pull it off."

It struck in, how deeply Fletcher tried to hide as he forced himself to meet Lili's mocking eyes.

"Then—in any case," he brought out at last with difficulty, "I am grateful to you."

He rose at that, as if to make an end of the interview. Lili rose too and came close to him.

"I did it for you," she said softly.

Fletcher allowed himself to get all the witchery of the eyes looking into his. His anger softened in spite of himself. How clever she was!

"I don't believe it," he answered.

Lili sighed deeply.

"At any rate, I shall think of you on your honeymoon."

She looked into space fixedly for a moment. "I can see it all now," she said. "You remember the piece she played in two years ago."

"Then you *had* seen her before," he put in quickly, then realized how little subtle he was. Lili had meant that he should trap her.

She nodded. "I have seen her in everything she has ever played in—here, in London and Paris. So it is, I can follow you in every step of your married life."

Fletcher remained silent.

Lili continued to look into space with the rapt gaze of one in a trance, and her words came with a meditative softness.

"Ah! that love scene! It was so beautiful, so convincing! I have remembered it always. It was her wedding night. She was standing by the hearth, her whole face lighted with the fire in her eyes, her body aglow with the fire in the grate. And she put out her arms, her beautiful arms this way—"

Lili's voice broke and the tears came to her eyes. "I shall think of it—so," she faltered.

Fletcher had been standing perfectly still. A mingled feeling of rage and resentment choked him and he could not say a word. He felt himself go white



from the sheer force he must needs use in the suppression of his feelings. He could have taken Lili and shaken her for the sacrilege of her imitation, for the viciousness of her every suggestion.

He turned away to steady himself, then turned back again, with sufficient poise to help her adjust her cloak.

"How long are you staying?" Lili asked, and the wistfulness of her tone showed she had understood his tacit rebuke.

"A year, possibly—"

Lili again let a sigh struggle up from somewhere.

"And you will come back playing the rôle of contented husband."

"It will not be a rôle," he put in quickly.

"But life is all a rôle, isn't it?" said Lili artlessly.

Fletcher shrugged. "Of course, if you look at it that way."

At the door she turned.

"Remember, I did it because I love you," she murmured.

"I don't believe it," he said again.

The only answer was her inimitable little laugh.

## IX

THE first year of her married life brought to Gabrielle supreme contentment and a thankfulness for the right working out of her matrimonial experiment. For she realized, as time went on and she was able to get a clearer perspective of the events just preceding her marriage, that it *had* been an experiment prompted not only by her immediate jealousy of Lili, but by something that ran even deeper, the restlessness that had been fastening so surely upon her for years. What she had accounted as love for George in those weeks when she was bringing herself to decision was in reality but the stirring of a physical passion that might have worked out just as well to her destruction as to her happiness. It was by the love that had become hers in the end that she was brought to an appreciation of the precarious balance of the

emotions that had swayed her in the first few months following her marriage. Her eventual security was the more satisfying for the realization of the dangers of that transition period. Her love for her husband was the bigger factor in her life because that love had cost her struggle.

The tour through Europe had been a desultory one, their vagaries proving fitful guides. They had lingered in quaint half-forgotten villages in the Esterelles for the most part, taking no account of time except that its passage brought them closer together. The monotony of their life worked to the nicest possible adjustment of their natures and the last six months left them perfectly attuned, with a better understanding of life in general through their understanding of each other.

It was Gabrielle who had made the first suggestion that they go back to America. There had come to her at times the feeling as of one who wastes lavishly something precious. It was as if, in the absolute solitude in which they lived, there lurked the danger of consuming at too prodigal a rate their mutual affection. It was not that she feared the evanescence of her own love; that she knew now as too strong and full ever to pass away. It was not that she doubted her husband's love, that love that had so patiently educated hers to its own higher level. It was—well—she was not sure what it was. She would have been so supremely happy to go on always as they were, but she faced as inevitable the fact of their return.

"The need of the world of men—"

Did George feel that, in spite of his seeming content? If not yet, she must forestall such a future possibility. It was not for her to open herself to the criticism of wilfully cutting him off from all his old friends and former interests. Perhaps, after a year or so when they had tried out together that other phase of existence, they could come back again and take up the old idyll where they had left it. Take it



up with a fuller sense of the permanence of its happiness!

Gabrielle had broached the subject one night after supper when they were standing on the terrace of their little villa at Castillane. Both had been thoughtful for some time with their eyes on the distant sunset that was yielding slowly to the twilight shadows.

Fletcher had turned suddenly with a sweep of emotion and taken Gabrielle in his arms.

"We are so happy," he had said simply as he kissed her.

There was a moment's silence as they rested so together. Then Gabrielle roused herself.

"Yes," she said in her low, mellow voice. "And it's because we are so happy I think, sometimes, we should go back—"

Fletcher looked at her quickly.

"Gabrielle!" he exclaimed. "You're not—"

"Tired of it?" She read his thought, and shook her head slowly. "I should like to go on this way always," she said, and he read her sincerity in the suppressed intensity of her tones and in the deep shadows of her eyes.

"Then why? Why?" he protested almost violently. "What is there for us over there?"

"It's because we *don't* know what there is that we should go back and face it. This way, I feel we're dodging—that our love is too closely guarded. Oh, I can't explain. It's an instinct, a reaching out to test ourselves by a big test just because our love is so big. And then—afterwards—we could come back—"

As Gabrielle spoke, she had drawn back a little. Her slender figure in its trailing black robe merged into the shadows of the terrace, and the low vibrations of her voice died away in the twilight stillness.

Fletcher had listened tensely, with a strained attention. But as Gabrielle put out her arms in the force of her appeal he gave a startled protest.

"No, no!" he cried, and taking a step

forward crushed her almost roughly in his arms.

Then, as if to soften the effect of his violence, he raised her face to his and kissed her lightly on the lips.

"Perhaps! in the Fall, my dear," he said. "But I'm not ready yet. Come, promise! No more of this to spoil our summer!"

She had promised in the end with a sigh.

"The sooner we get it over, the sooner we will be back," she had pleaded, but he had laughter that argument away.

"In the fall, then!" she had said.

"In the fall!" he agreed and they left it at that.

## X

If the first few months of their married life had brought to Gabrielle a warring of emotion and a struggle for adjustment, they had brought to Fletcher an even deeper struggle. Deeper because the thing with which he had to contend was so trivial that he blamed himself the more bitterly for allowing it to interfere with the smoothness of the happiness he had succeeded with such difficulty in winning.

When Lili had said, "I shall follow every step of your married life," he had shrunk more from the fact that it pointed Lili's bad taste than from any idea of possible bearing it might have upon his own life. It wasn't until after Lili had left him that he realized the suggestion had entered in and left its taint. The more so as the picture she had so cleverly conjured up of Gabrielle in her love-making seemed indelibly stamped on his brain to the scattering of those gossamer fancies he had been weaving in all the vague tenderness of romance. It was as if a beautiful sunset, haunting in its evanescence and shadowy suggestion, had been reduced to the crassness of a canvas daub.

So it was during the whole of the first few months after his marriage.



He saw in Gabrielle's every move, in her every tender glance and low-voiced endearment but a repetition of herself in one or another of the plays in which she had acted. He knew the thing but a psychological trick, himself the victim of an evil suggestion. That he himself was spoiling the beauty of their relation maddened him the more in that he realized Gabrielle was in reality as natural and spontaneous, as worthy of his unqualified devotion, as ever. He even found himself at times calculating her next attitude, provoking an expected response and hated himself for the malpractice of it.

Helen's words came back to him laden with a deeper significance now. "It is as if she were forever playing a rôle." Had Helen sensed this strange quality in her, too? Could there, perhaps, after all be a justification of his attitude? But no! It was simply that Helen, like himself, had been the victim of Lili's insidious influence.

What brought him up short in the end was the evidence, slight though it was, that Gabrielle herself was not quite happy. He put this down at once to the fact that with her keen intuition she had sensed his covert criticism, so he set about from that time on with all the force and determination his nature was capable of to uproot this ugly thing that threatened to make for discord and discontent.

He succeeded in the end, Gabrielle's perfect happiness proving the incentive necessary. It was not, however, until after they had struck out from the beaten tourist path and were following at random the stray byways of the Esterelles.

Then, as he and Gabrielle lived day by day, side by side in simple communion of thought and feeling with no shadow of the outside world between them, Fletcher lost so entirely the sense of her acting that he marvelled it could ever have been. She was so natural, so simple in her beauty, so frankly companionable. They wandered about the country-side together hand in hand; they breakfasted in the freshness of the

early morning under the yellow mimosas; they read and talked; Gabrielle sang and Fletcher listened, the clear tone of her voice a fit symbol of the perfect understanding that they had at last succeeded in making theirs.

The fact that the period of Fletcher's struggle coincided so exactly with that of Gabrielle's unhappiness argues the radical connection of the two. It may be the antagonism of class that Gabrielle nourished in her heart at the time of her marriage prompted a consciousness of self that justified her husband's attitude. Or it may be Fletcher's covert criticism, because of the very fact of its injustice, roused in Gabrielle, when she sensed it, the opposition that wrought to her discontent. But whatever the first cause, the trouble worked itself out to a satisfactory ending, with the result of months of peace and contentment and a happy security in each other's love.

It had seemed to Fletcher that they must always go on this way; the perfection of their relation seemed its warrant for continuing without thought of change. Thus it was Gabrielle's suggestion that they go back to America startled him to an almost unreasoning resistance. The more so as there stirred in him that night, as she faced him in the half-shadows with her beautiful arms outstretched in her appeal, the old haunting doubt of Lili's vicious sowing.

"A perfect actress!" The words echoed in his brain. "I shall follow every step of your married life together."

With a pang he took her roughly in his arms and crushed her to him as if to crush out forever that quivering, disturbing suspicion. He had thought it dead, but the mention of the outside world proved it still a factor to be dealt with.

No, he was not yet ready to go back. He could not go back. So he wrested from her the promise to wait, with all the while a sense of guilt that she knew the reason of his hesitancy. She had mentioned a test; it was doubtless that



she had in mind. It was for *his* sake, for *his* ultimate satisfaction—

And yet, was it really? Might there not be another side? Might not Gabrielle, with all her beauty and talent, feel a waste of energy there alone with him? Could a woman used to the compelling of hundreds, thousands, be content with the swaying of but one, and that one forever the same? Could the fealty, no matter how perfect, that she might exact from him, compensate for that broad range that up to a few months ago had made her life? And not only *her* life but the life of generations back of her! Might not Gabrielle all unconsciously be the victim of the old mummers' tradition that asserted the malignant grip the audience held upon every actor who truly loved his art.

He read now in a new light the struggle of their first weeks of married life. It had been the shadow of the public, that great public that had gathered to pay homage night after night to Gabrielle's wonderful acting, that had been so heavy between them. It was as if that vast multitude, having once been there, must always be there, if only in spirit, and she must play to them simply, unconsciously, with no show of artifice, but because it was intrinsically her nature so to do. Every emotion she felt, instead of being locked selfishly within her own breast, must needs go out till its vibrations evoke an answering chord in the breasts of others. The tragedy was that what Fletcher had attributed in the beginning as unnatural in her was in reality nature in its larger sense that merges individual identity in general humanity. Fletcher was none the happier for having worked out in his mind the subtleties of the difference.

The summer months were the more precious, however, in that their happiness was not free from the haunting fear of what the future might bring.

It was indicative of the trend and development of thought of each that what in the spring had been tentative suggestion in the fall took on the na-

ture of inevitable decision. Without further discussion of the matter, without a question on the part of either or the slightest voicing of the intense regret in their hearts for what they were giving up, they brought their idyll to a close with a semblance of casualness and sailed for America.

## XI

It was at a dinner at the Jimmy Treadwells' that Gabrielle made her début into that set of New York society with which her husband had identified his interests in previous years. There had been a few small preliminary affairs among Helen's friends, but Gabrielle very wisely set no store in her success with these. She knew inevitably that the great test would come when she was brought face to face at a dinner table with Lili Whitelaw.

The months of her married life had given Gabrielle even more confidence in her ability to qualify by the smart set standards. She attributed the disadvantage she had felt in those previous meetings with Lili to her own indecision of mind and uncertainty of position; as a married woman with the full sense of the security of an assured future she felt eager again to match her forces with Lili's. In her mind there was no question of her adequacy to meet the situation.

The Treadwell dinner she knew would offer the desired opportunity, and as she dressed she felt the same glow of expectancy, the same keen zest in life simply as life, that always filled her on first nights when she thrilled to the idea of the great audience eagerly awaiting her entrance.

Her costume had been a matter of great care. This was extraordinary for Gabrielle, whose choice of a thing was always immediate just because her taste was unerring.

Fletcher came into her room as she stood before the pier glass studying herself attentively. But there was no conceit in her attitude, only an impartial criticism.



"Do you like it?" she asked quietly, her eyes still on the image the glass gave back.

Fletcher stepped to her side and he, too, studied the picture.

The gown was a peacock blue, the soft elusiveness of it equalled only by its distinctiveness. The effect with Gabrielle's golden hair and deep eyes was startlingly beautiful.

Fletcher drew a deep breath as Gabrielle, noting his silence, turned to him questioningly.

"You are perfect," he said slowly as he kissed her.

Then holding her off as she smiled at his rapt expression he added:

"Almost *too* perfect!"

Her eyes clouded a little at that.

"You mean—" she said, "you would prefer a flaw—"

He shook his head smilingly. "I mean," he said, "that since the rest of us are *not* flawless, you—"

"Are out of place?" she cut in quickly.

"Not at all," he laughed. "*We* are out of place. You put us out of character."

But this did not satisfy her and she sighed deeply as she turned away. He recognized the fact that in some way he had transgressed, so he followed her as she went over to the couch and took up her wrap.

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said as she faced him. "But I don't want you to feel that way—that I am somehow different. I want to be of you, of your life, of these people. Don't you see? You say I put you out of character—that I—"

There was an unusual quaver in her voice.

"Gabrielle!" he protested as he took both her hands in his. "That was only banter—only— Ah! how beautiful you are! You will be the most beautiful of all there to-night."

"But what does that matter?" she cried with a certain despair in her voice. "I was quite confident of myself, of everything up to a second ago. And now, something, I don't know what, tells me—"

She caught herself up at that and forced a little laugh, as she handed him her cloak.

He wrapped her in it and then putting his arms about her held her close. The look in his eyes quite satisfied her and she forgot her momentary despair in the happiness of the kiss he pressed upon her lips.

The dinner was a brilliant affair. Mrs. Jimmy knew her rôle as hostess, with the result of enough harmony of interests, on the part of the guests selected, to make for general agreement, with just the right amount of disparity of idea to make for discussion. If conversation could not be said to strike depths of thought, at least it was subtly exhilarating and keyed one up to compel attention by outdoing one's neighbor in scintillation.

Gabrielle enjoyed it; it was like playing a game that called for a certain readiness of wit and trickiness of intellect.

For the first time she admitted the charm of a set she had previously judged as falsely flat. There was a certain allure in the very frankness of their superficiality and their defiance of anything that made for the discomfort of a serious viewpoint.

Her own effect satisfied her, too, which might have had something to do with her approval of the others. Her entrance, when most of the dinner company had foregathered, had provoked just the proper amount of subdued éclat with its preliminary pause of suspended interest.

Mrs. Jimmy had looked her over with quick scrutiny. Her "My dear, I am *so* glad," rang perfectly true and showed her as having declared quite for the newcomer. The other women held back graciously; the men were less subtle, showing their admiration more obviously.

Gabrielle was placed at dinner between Gordon Cowdrey and Terrence Wick, where she continued to carry her triumph easily.

Fletcher was at the other end of the table between two nondescript women



with Lili Whitelaw within comfortable sparring distance. He had enjoyed to the full the marked dignity of the bow and smile she returned in answer to his rather flippant "Ah, so there you are, Lili!"

He had to admit to a certain curiosity as to the line she would adopt next; he was the more fearful because of the austerity of her beginning, so he watched her with care.

She, in turn, kept her eyes on Gabrielle with open scrutiny. After two or three rounds of laughter from the other end of the table, obviously the result of some *mot* on the part of Gabrielle, Lili had leaned forward conspicuously and smiled her dazzling, intimate smile into Fletcher's eyes.

That was all, but Fletcher had the uncomfortable consciousness that Gabrielle had caught that daring look. The more so, as the persiflage of which she had been the promoter suddenly flagged and dropped to a heavy silence that settled gradually on the other groups. Everyone looked about, disconcerted at the uncomfortable lull.

Then Lili leaned forward, a gleam in her slanting eyes, and looked at Gabrielle, who met her gaze steadily. It was the first indication she had given of being aware at all of Lili's presence. For a single second, as she realized the attention of the whole table was focussed upon her, directed by Lili's scrutiny, she had felt herself at a loss as to what to do. She ended by doing nothing, simply prolonging the attitude in which Lili had surprised her. She sat leaning slightly forward, a picture of arrested attention, with one arm outstretched toward her wine glass, the other in graceful poise at her side. Not a muscle moved as she took the brunt of the critical gaze of the whole company. Her eyes never wavered as they met Lili's; only her breathing showed her alive.

Lili broke the tenseness of the situation with her light laugh.

"You know—" she cried out and, although she looked straight at Fletcher, she embraced everyone pres-

ent in her range. "Just that way. You see?" and she indicated Gabrielle with a sweep of her hands. "The candles seem to have been arranged like footlights. How lovely she is! Like a beautiful statue!"

The last words were said softly with a sort of suppressed tenderness.

Gabrielle got it, as everyone did. She felt herself trembling with anger. Then, reading the pain in her husband's eyes as she turned instinctively to him, she had the courage to rise above the thrust.

"That reminds me," she said in her rich, low voice, "of an incident that happened at Grasse. Do you remember, George?"

She got his quick appreciation of the stand she was taking, as she smiled into his eyes, and went on to tell her story with greater conviction.

It was simply a tourist anecdote. The fact that it had no connection with Lili's remark pointed the most signally Gabrielle's tact in hitting upon it. She told it well, with just the right voice shadings and with a pause here and there to allow her listeners their laugh. When it was over, Gabrielle looked again at her husband and read her success in the look of gratitude he gave her for having saved so awkward a situation.

Conversation started up again with its usual hum, when Lili showed evidence of also having a story to tell. Again there was a lull and Lili took the floor. Hers, too, was a tourist story, a shipboard incident, told haphazard with a hit or miss daring of wit and inimitable byplay of pantomime. It was, all in all, a triumph of brilliant incoherence that got one through the very graphicness of its chaos. Lili's mirth was infectious; her audience roared itself good-naturedly almost to the point of hysteria.

It was when the merriment was at its height that Lili again looked at Fletcher. The fact that he pointedly evaded her glance told her that she had scored. She watched him carefully for the rest of the dinner; the fact that he



evaded Gabrielle's eyes, too, when they sought his, pointed to Lili still more her triumph.

## XII

To what extent the Treadwell dinner had been a tragedy Fletcher admitted to himself only gradually. At the time, he had looked upon Lili's part in the matter simply as a piece of maliciousness, prompted by her jealousy. It was, altogether, a most unfortunate incident, but that was all. Six months later he had come to realize the vital import of it and the bearing it had not only upon his own happiness but also upon that of Gabrielle.

Lili in her sharp little way had ferreted out Gabrielle's weak point, weak not because of any flaw intrinsically, but because of maladjustment to outside circumstances. Gabrielle's weakness lay in her very perfection, a perfection so simple, so natural that, just because of its simplicity and naturalness, it created doubt as to its validity. It might as well have been the last word in artifice, acting refined to the essence of the natural. She seemed, as Lili so artfully suggested, inevitably behind the footlights, with all the while the consciousness of an audience to be played upon, a consciousness that had its root not in any egotism but in the traditions of her art.

It was for this very reason that Fletcher, as he struggled with his doubts and disappointment, despaired. The thing he had to contend with was not primarily in Gabrielle, but in her race.

At first he regretted bitterly that they had come back to America, but in the end he realized the problem was one he would have been obliged to face eventually, even if they had lingered on in the quiet of the Esterelles. It was simply that the problem was rendered more acute by the presence of others.

It was not that Fletcher's basic love for Gabrielle was less fine and strong; the surface dissatisfaction was there-

fore the more tragic. By degrees all the old admiration that her beauty and grace had compelled gave way to a protest at the perfection of them. If he could have surprised her once in awkwardness! If the attitude were less perfect; the voice less beautifully modulated!

At dinners, at the opera, he was tormented constantly lest he read in the eyes of others a reflection of his own criticism of this woman he so loved. That people were beginning to realize a lack in her he knew full well; Lili Whitelaw had seen to that. It was obvious in the very polite deference with which she was treated generally, a deference that precluded anything suggestive of intimacy. Even the enthusiasm of the various men who had rushed in the beginning to pay homage to her had flagged. She was accepted, as his wife was bound to be, of course, but she did not dominate. It was almost, in the end, as if people simply tolerated her for the sake of the Fletcher name, and he shrank from the boredom he might read in their eyes.

It was as if that, too, might be a reflection of what was going on in his own soul. For Fletcher could not but admit as time went on the monotony of his wife's perfection. Often as he held her in his arms and told her how lovely she was, he hated himself as a hypocrite; he would so infinitely have preferred the cheek tear-stained, her lovely hair in disarray, the attitude of less assurance. Anything to prove the real humanity of her!

And yet, it was for the very humanity of her that Fletcher had married her! In that lay the incongruity of their present relation. It was for that reason he struggled the more to break through the outside crust of her seeming artificiality, to find again those qualities that made for spontaneity of interest in daily intercourse.

It was at a party given at Lili's eight months after their return to America that Fletcher realized something had to be done definitely to enable him to throw off the cynical discontent that



was fastening so surely upon him. Lili's party had been a costume ball.

"Come in any old thing; it's to be just a rollick," Lili had announced gaily as she encountered Fletcher one day coming out of Tiffany's. "No, I'm going up to Dreiser's. What time is it? Oh! Quarter of one!"

She gazed reflectively about and then brought her troubled eyes back to Fletcher's. "It *would* be nice to lunch together at Sherry's. Where is Gabrielle?"

"Lunching at Helen's. I was going to the club."

Then, after a pause, "Of course, we can lunch together at Sherry's."

Fletcher was painfully conscious of his awkwardness. Had he taken Lili's suggestion more promptly, there would have seemed less guilt in his yielding. For it was the most natural thing in the world for any two individuals of their free and easy set to lunch together on a chance encounter. His pause, with its very obvious weighing of the matter, had been the incriminating factor and seemed to brand the meeting as an illicit rendezvous. It was this very uneasy feeling, as of doing something wrong, that gave zest to the tête à tête that followed. There was just that *air intime* about it that Lili could evoke out of the most unyielding of circumstances.

Lili, herself, had never looked prettier. Fletcher enjoyed her little *naïvetés* and almost forgot they were part of her artificiality. She told a riské joke with the most infectious of laughs; she allowed herself to be caught in a lie and smiled deeply into his eyes her appreciation of his cleverness. She subdued her mirth at just the right moment to a wistful thoughtfulness.

"And now tell me," she had said, "what the months have brought you."

Fletcher hesitated to frame his reply convincingly.

"Never mind, if you don't want to," she had put in softly with almost a note of commiseration in her voice.

"Oh, it isn't *that*," he said.

"What?" she asked wonderingly.

"What your tone implied—" he had said before he thought.

"What *did* it imply?" she asked and he realized the trap.

"Oh, dissatisfaction," he said. "But I'm *perfectly* happy."

She ignored his last statement.

"I implied nothing of the sort," she said. "That idea must have originated in your own mind. A protest too much!"

His only answer was to repeat:

"I am perfectly happy."

Lili thought deeply at that.

Then, as if with lightning inspiration:

"So, that's it! I have wondered often. You seem, somehow, to have lost your old zest in things. It's because, being *perfectly* happy—you have nothing to agonize for, no heights to climb—"

Fletcher frowned at that. He was at a loss how to meet Lili's thrust; a fact that proved his wits rusty. She saw her advantage.

"Ah, can't you see? It's when two people are *not* perfectly happy that they're closest together. The little scenes and recriminations—the tears and things—the knowing each other's weaknesses and faults—the dear little intimacies that spring from unreason—the forgiving and being forgiven—ah!"

Lili drew a deep breath and there was supreme ecstasy in her tone as, with a voice tremulous with emotion, she wound up, "I *love* to be forgiven."

This brought them out of the depths. Fletcher put back his head and laughed long and heartily. Lili joined him, but before their mirth had worked itself quite out, she had risen. She had scored in amusing him; she meant to leave in the flush of her triumph.

Fletcher said nothing that day to Gabrielle of his meeting with Lili. He had found her strangely silent at dinner time, and, although he tried to broach the subject several times, felt unequal to handling it with just the proper casualness.



"Tomorrow!" he had said to himself, but the next day dragged its length without his bringing himself to the point.

It wasn't until they were dressed for the ball and about to start that Fletcher took the initiative. It is doubtful if he would have taken it then, had it not been for a strange look of scrutiny he had surprised in Gabrielle's eyes. He met it with a sense of guilt that was no less keen for all his realization that he had done nothing really culpable.

"By the way," he had begun. "Did I tell you I ran into Lili yesterday and we—"

Gabrielle had turned away.

"Yes, I know," she answered in her deep voice.

This brought Fletcher up short.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. Then, "How did you know?"

"Lili called at Helen's on her way home."

"I see," said Fletcher.

They looked at each other a minute.

"How do you like my costume?" asked Gabrielle quietly.

"It's beautiful. Who did it?"

"Lucille."

"I imagine it will be something of a romp tonight," he said, turning away.

"You mean you think me overdressed?"

There was a certain defiance in Gabrielle's tone that was quite new. It aroused an answering antagonism in Fletcher.

"Not overdressed exactly! But I can't imagine a frolic with a headdress like that."

He regretted the words the minute he had said them and put out his hand to her, but she turned away.

Then as if with a sudden resolution she turned back and faced him squarely.

"I cannot frolic!" she said in low, even tones. "You know that. That's where the trouble lies!"

Her directness took him aback.

"The trouble lies—" he repeated blankly. "What trouble?"

She sighed deeply at that. Then,

looking at the clock she shook her head. "We haven't time now. Tomorrow—"

"Gabrielle!" he cried. "You're not happy! You're—"

"No," she said, "I am *not* happy."

He started to protest but she cut him short. "No, no! You mustn't. We *have* to see this ball through. I promised Lili—"

"Ah," he said, "it's Lili."

But she shook her head. "I wish it were only Lili—"

He looked at her quickly at that. She met his eyes unflinchingly and it was his turn now to turn away. He realized she had guessed the truth of his dissatisfaction and felt himself not ready to meet the issue.

"Very well," he had said. "Tomorrow!"

He wanted to take her in his arms, for he felt an overwhelming tenderness for her as he realized the months had brought her, too, suffering. But the gorgeous Egyptian costume with its towering headdress was too forbidding, and while he hesitated she had put her cloak about her shoulders, and passed out into the hall.

The ball was a romp; Lili's parties always were. To Fletcher it came as a happy relief, a breathing space. He had had no method of gauging the extent of the brain worry the last few months had brought him; the fact that he had no difficulty in giving himself utterly to all the little absurdities in which Lili's affairs abounded was the first indication he had of the real need of change. He had never condemned frivolity, but he had never been able to give himself up to it convincingly. It was with great surprise, therefore, that he found himself this particular night equal to any grotesque caper. Particularly as he had started out under such inauspicious circumstances and with the weight upon him of the responsibility of the talk he and Gabrielle were to have in the morning.

Lili had challenged him upon his arrival.

"Your costume is too stupid," she had said, referring to his very conser-



vative domino. "You will have to make up in spirit."

Lili, herself, was irresistible as a little street gamin, with tousled hair and patched clothes. A large hole in one of her stockings showed her at her whitest.

"And you—you are perfect as usual," she had murmured to Gabrielle. "But you don't go with a Jazz band. Ah! there it is! En avant! But no! Gordon, you dance with Gabrielle—"

And before he knew it Fletcher was threading the mazes of the fox trot with Lili pressed perilously close in his arms.

It was that first dance that stirred in him the desire for once in his life to lose his dignity, for the dignity and reserve that were so essential a part of his make-up were beginning to be identified in his mind with the pressure of thought that was wearying his brain and he longed for even the briefest respite from them. So he devoted himself to Lili and Mrs. Tony Winters and frolicked with the best of them.

He had looked about after the first dance for Gabrielle.

"She is flirting with Gordon," Lili had announced, and then smiled at the absurdity of the suggestion. "Gabrielle could never flirt, really, could she?" she went on.

Then, with a deep sigh, "She is so wonderful."

Fletcher floundered about, trying to select the least compromising line. He ended by suggesting champagne and the two of them withdrew to the dining room.

At two o'clock Fletcher felt the spirit that had prompted his gaiety suddenly flag. He was tired, dead tired and wanted to go home. The revelry seemed suddenly empty and he felt again the weight of the problem he had been trying so hard to lose. He sought out Gabrielle in desperate haste. She had carefully avoided him during the whole evening, pleading a full program when they were brought face to face. He stopped her in the middle of a dance with Jimmy Treadwell.

"I want to go home," he said.

She read his fatigue and left Jimmy in the midst of violent protests. They didn't even seek out Lili to make their adieux, but went directly.

Nothing was said until they had reached Gabrielle's room. Then they faced each other, conscious that the crisis they must meet, must be met now. There was an ill-suppressed excitement in Fletcher's manner, a rather hard determination in Gabrielle's.

He had thrown himself in a chair; she came and sat in an unyielding attitude directly in front of him. They looked at each other. Then Gabrielle said with perfect self-possession,

"In what have I failed?"

It was the exact repetition of a line in her last show.

Fletcher made a little despairing gesture, then roused himself with the realization that now was the time to fight the matter out if they hoped for future understanding.

"Oh, it's just that—that," he said. "I feel—I cannot get over the idea you are acting, forever acting—that every word you utter, every gesture you make is a repetition of something that has gone before, something that has belonged to everyone, everyone who could pay. When you put out your arms, I think of all those stage lovers who have come to you. I think of the crowds who have applauded you for the thrill of your lovemaking. Those crowds! They seem so always there, and you belong to them, not to me! Oh, Gabrielle! To feel for one second that you were mine—mine—"

Gabrielle had sat perfectly erect with a set strained look in her eyes. The despair in Fletcher's voice as he poured out his words seemed to strike an answering note in her heart. She dragged herself to her feet with a great sob and then found herself weeping wildly in his arms. Fletcher was startled. He had somehow thought that she would meet his appeal with chill analysis; her quick yielding to her emotions, that had its element of the childish, called forth the greater tenderness because of its



unexpectedness. It was with a feeling of thankfulness that he pressed her to him; in the abandon of her grief she had quite lost the sense of self. For the first time since they had come back to America he felt they were alone together with no shadow of the outside world between them.

### XIII

THE Fletchers went to their camp in the Adirondacks for a month. It was Fletcher's idea. Gabrielle had pleaded that they were running away from their problem, but Fletcher had been obdurate.

"We will have a second honeymoon, and come back strong enough to fight anything," he had said gaily.

The scene with Gabrielle had given him new confidence in himself. Her confession that she, too, had been conscious of some sort of barrier between them since their return had filled him with joy. He had thought of her as living in herself with no sense of the rift between them that threatened to become wider just because of her ignorance of its existence. The frank discussion of the matter that had followed the morning after Gabrielle's passionate abandon to her grief had seemed to mark the beginning of a new era of understanding.

"I have realized it all so thoroughly," Gabrielle had said. "I cannot lose myself. I cannot be silly and frolic and all the rest of it. There is something that prevents. I have longed so many times, as I have watched Lili, for the ability to be inconsistent, for the charm that springs from unreliability."

Fletcher had laughed at that, but he glimpsed something of the struggle that had been going on in Gabrielle's mind these many months, a struggle her beautiful calm exterior had so completely belied.

The first week in the mountains they talked, as they had never talked before, each seeming to take delight in probing his own soul and dragging to light unsuspected little weaknesses for the

other's scrutiny. It seemed impossible, that, having once broken down all barriers of reserve, they could ever again be anything but honest and direct in their dealings with each other. The weeks in the Esterelles showed empty and valueless in comparison with the fullness of the intimacy established in the first few days of this, as Fletcher had termed it, their second honeymoon.

The second week of their stay brought a variety of forwarded letters.

"Why did we leave an address?" sighed Gabrielle one morning at breakfast, as she listlessly cut open and sorted the numerous letters. One brought her a pause and then a slightly nervous laugh. Fletcher looked up.

"A letter from Kleinberg!" she exclaimed. "An offer for his new show!"

Their eyes met, a quick question in his.

"Do you *want*—" he began.

"Certainly *not*," she answered shortly. "How can you think—" Her eyes dropped to a letter he was just picking up. Fletcher looked at it quickly; the conspicuous stationery with its erratic scrawl confessed it immediately as Lili's.

"Lili!" he said weakly and showed his confusion as he opened the envelope.

Gabrielle said nothing, but kept her eyes upon him as he read. He read it once, then over again slowly to gain time with all the while a sense of the effect it would have on Gabrielle when she read it. For he must needs pass it over to her; of that he was certain.

"How absurd!" he exclaimed at last, as he held the letter out. "Lili's heard the rumor you're going back on the stage—"

"And writes to offer you condolence—" put in Gabrielle steadily, ignoring the letter.

"Why, not exactly! That is—well—something of the sort. Read it yourself."

Gabrielle continued to ignore the outstretched letter, so Fletcher drew it back a little angrily.

"I'll read it to you," he suggested.

But Gabrielle had turned away.



"I'm not at all interested," she had said.

Fletcher was irritated by her manner. That he was in no way responsible for Lili's trickiness made Gabrielle's attitude seem the more unreasonable. He turned to the rest of his mail, made a few commentaries which were received politely but coolly, and then excused himself from the table.

Strange to say, the thing that impressed him most in the whole scene was the perfect enunciation of the words, "I am not at all interested."

Not again, during the rest of their stay in the mountains, did the two recover the understanding that had characterized their first days there. It would seem as if Gabrielle regretted with a wild regret those days of intimate revelation and so entrenched herself the more securely behind a hard reserve. Had Fletcher been found guilty of bruising about her confidences at large, her rigour of attitude could not have been more severe.

Whether a reaction of this sort was inevitable to a nature like Gabrielle's, the integrity of which demands reservations, or whether Lili's letter brought it about, it is impossible to say. At any rate, Fletcher found himself day by day thrown more and more on his own resources. He pleaded openly for a renewal of their intimacy that had deemed nothing too sacred to touch, but Gabrielle would only smile her cold smile and answer—"I have not changed. There is no difference in my attitude."

The end of the month found them farther apart than they had been in the beginning. The suggestion that they go back to New York came from Fletcher.

During the summer months that followed, Gabrielle and Fletcher were indefatigable in their social activities. Newport, Bar Harbour, Narragansett! A week here, a fortnight there, a yachting trip at random. It was all very delightful, besides serving the purpose intended, that of precluding any possibility of intimate intercourse between the two.

Fletcher found himself, when they were alone, for any length of time together, goaded by Gabrielle's formality into an unreasoning irritability. The more so, as those moments when she had given herself to him, free from self-consciousness, were still vivid in his mind. It seemed almost as if there had been malice in her momentary abandon and that she had meant those memories to linger as a torment.

He could have stood all this, however, had it not been for a new element that entered into the situation directly after their return from the mountains. Gabrielle began most obviously to cheapen herself. It was as if, in desperation at the thought that she was losing her hold of her husband, she sought to attach to herself some suitor, any suitor whose attentions might point her charm.

As Lili had said, "Gabrielle cannot flirt." It was quite true. Her attempts at it were often ludicrous, pathetic. Her nature was too serious a one to do anything lightly; she succeeded only in making herself ridiculous. Gordon Cowdrey evaded her; Terrence Wick made comments—to other women. And all Fletcher could do was to sit by and watch. It was the more pitiful tragedy to him because he knew the motive that prompted her to her folly.

It was her way of attempting to humanize herself, of undermining that perfection that seemed the bar between them. He remembered the sharp pain in her voice as she had cried one night, "I want to be of you, of your life, of these people!"

Poor Gabrielle! She flirted crassly and assumed hilarity. She copied every absurdity of those about her without achieving any of the abandon that makes absurdity feasible.

Fletcher protested; she met him with chill formality.

"But why *should* you object?" she demanded. "The other women in your set—"

"But you! *You* are different. Can't you see?" he cried in desperation.

"Exactly! It's *that* I'm working to



overcome," she answered calmly, and refused to go into the matter further. There was that in her manner, in her deadly poise that had the power of sapping his force of resistance. He would go to her asurge with emotion; a word or two of her beautifully modulated voice reduced him to a feeling of helplessness and dull despair.

It was just before the first dinner given in town in the fall that Fletcher felt himself exasperated to the point of making any scene to interrupt the intolerable indifference of their intercourse. He had gone to Gabrielle's room in the afternoon only to be turned away by the maid. "Madame is resting."

This seemed all a part of Gabrielle's deliberate intention to exclude him from her life as she now lived it, and he had spent the intervening time between then and tea-time in brooding upon the unfairness of it.

At five o'clock he had gone again to her room. He found her lying listlessly in a chaise longue. As she looked up at him, he was conscious for the first time that she was thinner, paler than he had ever seen her. His anger broke as he bent over quickly and kissed her.

"Gabrielle!" he cried. "Why do you do it? Why this indifference, this deliberate keeping me off?"

She did not evade him as usual, only sighed wearily as she answered.

"It isn't deliberate. It's—oh, I can't explain! But ever since those first days in the mountains I have been more conscious of myself than ever. Just because we did get down so deep—just because I laid bare my every thought! I have tried hard, tried hard. But when we are alone together, just because I do try to be natural each word is more forced, each attitude more deliberate. I have struggled, but there has seemed only one way—to keep away from you, to have other people about. And then they, too, are conscious of my continual acting, Gordon and Terry! I weary them, and you read their thoughts. Oh, I know,

I know. Whichever way I turn, whichever—"

Her voice went on monotonously.

As Fletcher looked at her, he took in her words and their meaning, but he felt himself in no way gripped as he had been when she had sobbed out her trouble so wildly in his arms. She might have been rehearsing a monologue in a new play for all the emotional effect she had on him. She read her failure in the dull look in his eyes as they rested upon her.

"One thing," she said, and now her voice trembled a little. "I still love you. I shall always love you. My love has strengthened as yours has weakened."

He put up his hand in protest but she shook her head.

"It's quite true. Why deny it?"

Again he opened his lips to speak, but somehow lacked the energy.

Her low, carefully enunciated words as usual sapped his strength.

She rose now and went to her dressing-table.

"You see—even these few minutes you are bored."

Then with a sudden flash she put out her arms. "I would give anything in the world to stir you, thrill you as I did in the days before we were married—when every time I looked out into the audience I could read the surge of love in your eyes. Oh, George!"

Fletcher made a supreme effort to meet her appeal. He took a step weakly forward. She saw his indecision and burst into a laugh that rang true and musical.

"Do you remember it?" she asked lightly. "That is an echo from my first play called 'Disillusion.' Or was that before your day?"

Fletcher was caught unawares. Doubt, anger, the sense that he had been tricked surged up in him. He stood a second, breathing heavily, his eyes in Gabrielle's then turned and left the room.

#### XIV

THAT night at the dinner it was with the greatest effort that Fletcher could



bring himself to talk at all. Lili seized at once upon his depression and made it the subject of much banter.

Conversation turned on the rumor, still current, of Gabrielle's return to the stage.

"But all women *do* go back," Lili had announced with conviction.

"I shall never go back," Gabrielle had said calmly.

"But once you have been able to stir a multitude, how *can* you be content with just us?" Lili protested. Then with a drop, "With just George, in fact. Or is it *he* qualifies as a whole audience?"

Gabrielle hesitated a brief second and as she hesitated Lili had turned to Fletcher.

"But *you*? Wouldn't you like to see her once more behind the footlights? To feel that expectant thrill just before her entrance—to feel yourself in the grip of her acting—"

Fletcher smiled a forced smile as he shook his head, but Lili had already turned again to Gabrielle.

"Well, I know if I had led your life," she said, "I'd be ineffably bored with all this. Admit now, honestly. Doesn't it bore you sometimes? Don't you pine now and then for a little of the old tumultuous adulation?"

Gabrielle had been leaning slightly forward, a flush on her face, her lips slightly parted. Her eyes sought those of her husband, but he was exchanging platitudes with the woman next him and avoided her gaze.

Gabrielle relaxed her attitude suddenly and with a light laugh took her decision.

"Well, if you force me—yes, I *do* pine for the stage. Some day I *shall* go back."

## XV

KLEINBERG'S show opened in January with Gabrielle in the leading rôle. Fletcher had opposed the move bitterly at first and there had been many scenes. The fact that they continually descended to argument and recrimination, quite

contrary to the nature of both, made their dissension seem the more terrible. Fletcher was exasperated to an unreasonable irritability; Gabrielle had recourse to cutting sarcasms.

The newspapers took up the matter of the new play and Fletcher was driven to his club to avoid persistent reporters. Pictures of Gabrielle greeted him in every newspaper he picked up. He disliked his friends to bring the thing to open discussion; he resented silence in regard to it as an indication of pity for his plight.

It was the day after the contract was signed that Fletcher was brought to the realization that there was something deeper involved in Gabrielle's decision than simply a woman's vagary. He had gone to her room to find her looking fixedly in the glass and there were unmistakable signs of tears on her cheeks. His mood softened as he sat down beside her.

"Well?" she asked.

"I came to tell you—" he said, and then hesitated.

The thing he had come to say seemed impossible now as he looked at her.

Her attitude stiffened and the light in her eyes gave way to the hard glint that was characteristic of them now.

"You came to tell me that if I persist, we must separate. Is that it?"

Her cold way of putting it angered him.

"That's exactly what I mean," he said and his voice sounded harsh. "I can't stand all this row—reporters and rehearsals and that damned Jew of a manager."

She had turned away at that and he could not see her face.

"I will go and live at the Club. We must keep up a certain appearance. You can have the house—"

His anger trailed off as she uttered a sharp little protest, and it was then he got the full force of her move as the strategy of a woman playing a game for a desperate end.

"No, no!" she cried. "Not—not yet. Wait till after the opening night. It may be different then. Something may



happen. Oh, it isn't that this has separated us. It may be *this* will bring us together again. As it was, we could not have gone on. Anything, anything rather than that terrible, silent disapproval there was before. Now, perhaps, when I am back in my own element—I may stir you as I want to do—I may cease to bore you—”

She breathed a deep sigh that was half a sob and put her hand over her face.

Fletcher took an indecisive step forward. It was indicative of the strained relation that now existed between them that even in the face of her confession with all that it held of heroic sacrifice and love he could not bring himself to take her in his arms.

“Very well!” he faltered at length. “I will do nothing yet. Perhaps—perhaps something will happen.”

They both realized the flat inadequacy of the words and as they hesitated how to cover decently the failure of them, Gabrielle's maid came in.

“Mr. Kleinberg!” she announced.

## XVI

It was with something of the old feeling of exhilaration hardly suppressed that Fletcher entered the theatre the opening night of Gabrielle's performance. By accident of circumstance it had proved the same place where she had played in her last show. Fletcher even recognized some familiar faces among the ushers. There was the same hum of excitement, the same buzz of conversation.

Since the night when Gabrielle had revealed her object in returning to the old life, Fletcher had gone through a succession of curious psychological phases.

First, there had come a sense of pity for her at the uselessness of the sacrifice she was making, together with deep contrition that he had wronged her by attributing to her an unworthy motive. Then had come a question—was the sacrifice useless?

Might not Gabrielle with her fine

sense of values, her keen intuition, be right?

Might not this be, as she had said, the only way of establishing once again the old relation of understanding and devotion?

Back in her old element, she might again wring from him the old thrill of adoration, compel that glorious response her nature so needed, the lack of which had so sorely tormented her.

The more Fletcher thought of the matter, the greater hope he conjured up that the experiment prove a happy one. The hope became almost a certainty as he dwelt upon it and the last week before the opening found him with a sense of security as to the outcome of it all.

As he took his seat, the music started up. He put his hand over his eyes for a minute to control himself, for he was suddenly overwhelmed by a flood of emotion and recollection that left him trembling and uncertain of himself. Then he looked about. There was a glow over everything, a subdued expectancy in the faces raised so eagerly to the stage. And then the curtain rose.

At the same instant there was a confusion in the stage box nearest him. As Fletcher turned in annoyance at the untimely interruption, the spell of his rapt anticipation seemed broken. He did not need the smile Lili flashed him to tell him who it was. His eagerness died out on the second and in its place a lethargy seemed to fasten upon him. He knew inevitably that the incident, trivial though it was, had disturbed his thoughts, upon the continuity of which his whole future happiness depended. He watched with a dull resentment the settling of the party—the Treadwells and Gordon, Larry Winters—What were they saying about him? Some *bon mot* of Lili's at his expense, doubtless!

He was startled out of his speculation by a thunderous applause, and with a sharp feeling of guilt turned to see that Gabrielle had already made her entrance. Her eyes as they met his over the footlights showed all too sure-



ly that she had caught him in his abstraction. There was a passion of protest in the look she gave him; Fletcher could only meet it with grim despair, and with the realization that those few seconds had lost them each other.

Gabrielle played that night as she had never played before, with a wild abandon that left her audience gasping from sheer emotional strain. The applause was violent, insistent. She came before the curtain time and time again. Lili threw her the orchids she was wearing. Gabrielle smiled her acknowledgment as she raised them to her lips and kissed them.

In the whole frenzy of the ovation, Fletcher felt himself the only one unmoved. He forced himself to applause, with a consciousness of Lili's scrutiny. The last curtain call showed Gabrielle white and weary. She bowed with her usual grace, and then looked straight at her husband. Fletcher felt the despair in his heart only too accurately mirrored

in the depths of her beautiful eyes.

Out in the lobby he met Lili.

"You *must* come to supper with us," she insisted.

But he shook his head. "No," he answered and evaded her look. "Gabrielle will be tired!"

Outside when he found his motor, he hesitated on the step of it. Then, with a gesture as of quick decision he turned away.

"Go around to the stage-door and wait for Mrs. Fletcher," he directed his chauffeur.

Then, getting into a taxi:

"To the Union Club," he said wearily.

Lili Whitelaw and her party had watched the little by-play.

Gordon Cowdrey bent low to catch the words that Lili's red lips were framing.

"After all, marriage is so little subtle!"



## THE FISHERMAN

By George O'Neil

Time drags his great gray net along,  
Snaring the ended years that fly . . .  
Dragging his old, old net;  
And only the stars slip by.



THE eyes of woman are the keyholes through which man peers into the rooms of her heart.



LIFE should be like the greatest book you have ever read.





# COMFORT

By James Drake

THERE was one who could comfort her.

\* \* \*

Her beautiful face was as white as a lily petal and her full round lips trembled as she bent over the coffin of her husband.

She had loved him passionately.

She was conscious of nothing but the corpse of the man she had loved.

Her grief absorbed her.

The minister spoke to her gently, but her eyes did not move from the coffin.

Her mother put her arms about her quivering shoulders, but she did not realize that anyone was near.

When her little child cried out to her it was as if she had no life.

There seemed to be none who could comfort her.

\* \* \*

There was a man about town who dropped in for the funeral.

He loathed the heavy fragrance of the floral pieces, the discordant whispering, the stifled sobs, the darkened rooms, the frightened children, and the unconcerned undertaker.

He came because it was the thing to do.

He was the one who could comfort her . . .

"How stunning you look in black, my dear!" he whispered.



# THEIR KISSES

By Karl R. Coolidge

SHE has just said "Yes": \_\_\_\_\_

En route from the church: \_\_\_\_\_

On the honeymoon: \_\_\_\_\_

Settled down: \_\_\_\_\_

After a year: \_\_\_\_\_

Two years later: { \_\_\_\_\_ \*

*\*But not with (his wife) (her husband).*





# THE EXONERATION OF YOUNG DASS

By L. M. Hussey

THEY had no objection to married men in that club, but the married men, from the nature of their servitude, seldom put in an appearance. When a member was about to take a wife he was given a dinner that amounted to a farewell. This evening there was being vouchsafed to Hansel, on the night before his wedding day, that melancholy fêting.

Phillip Chambers, the portrait painter, was master of ceremonies. The hour had passed midnight and strands of twisted smoke hung like wraiths in the atmosphere of the dining-room. Hansel, the man honoured, had gone to sleep with a half-emptied glass in front of him, and two or three of the other less hardy spirits were somnolent. A still-articulate group, near Chambers, had drifted into fatuities.

Chambers listened to them in a scowling silence.

"You fellows are liars!" he broke out, suddenly.

"How's that?"

"I say you're liars, all of you. You hold that you're unmarried because of your cleverness, whereas you're unmarried because of your blind, dumb luck!"

A man opposite Chambers raised his eyebrows superciliously.

"I suppose you're out of our class," he said. "I suppose *you* are the clever one!"

"No, I'm not," said Chambers. "I was lucky myself . . ."

"Well, as I was going to say—"

"It happened two or three summers ago," broke in Chambers, assuming the flexed position of one who is about to tell quite a story. "It happened be-

cause I yielded to one of my periodic fancies to do landscapes. I confessed my desire to a person whom I have now come to view more charitably—who probably didn't wish me any especial evil—and he told me of a quiet place in the country where I would be properly fed, comfortably housed and little disturbed—"

"Look here!" broke in a voice.

"He said," continued Chambers, with suave dominance, "that there were only two in the family—a widow and her young son. I wrote to this woman. She answered my letter pleasantly and I wrote again, suggesting terms. They were arranged and I packed up some board, a roll of canvas and a sketch box. I left for the place in July, without a foreboding.

"I had given very little thought to the widow and my picture of her was quite colourless and conventional. She was a mere sartorial fancy to me; I saw her only as a black dress. Above this dress I imagined a pale face that never emerged into features. For me she had no age.

"She had promised to meet me at the station and drive me to the house, which was considerably outside the village. I got off and looked about for the black dress. But no figure in sable garments presented itself. The train pulled out; a band of smoke and cinders dropped down across the platform; I stood, encumbered with parcels, like a man lost in another country. I was in a mental attitude for warm remarks when a young woman approached me.

"'You must be Mr. Chambers,' she said.



"I am! Did Mrs. Bossard send you?"

"The young woman laughed.

"I'm Mrs. Bossard," she said.

"In my surprise I probably disconcerted her by staring. She was so unlike the black dress of my negligent fancy! Her clothes were white and summery; in her blouse the two ends of a green scarf tossed in the wind like the leaves of a fragile plant. She wore no hat and her straight, thick hair was drawn close about her head in the manner of a turban. It was brown, a rich shade, like the gloss and colour acquired by a meerschaum pipe after long smoking. Her face was laughing and pretty.

"The appearance of this woman was one of the great unpleasant surprises of my life. As she dropped her eyes before my astonished stare, I saw that I would have to arm myself against her. I had come down from the city to paint, with nothing more distracting in my mind than a vague presence of black clothes. The black clothes had disappeared like conjury and left a notably good-looking woman. I don't want you fellows to imagine that I'm particularly terrified by a well-gotten-up face, but I don't like to be—so to speak—ambushed by one; taken unprepared, unaware. To a man of my undomestic disposition there's something in that that touches the dreadful. I had an impulse to run away.

"But it couldn't be managed. The woman took me to a team she had waiting and we drove off. The horses moved along rapidly, with considerable spirit. I felt rather like a trophy being carried home.

"I found the place charming enough. We approached the house through a lane that for several hundred yards revealed nothing, until, on the completion of a sharp turn, the buildings were visible through an enclosure of trees. The house was built in a hollow and rising ground came up from it at every point, like the sides of a shallow bowl.

"Do you like it?" the woman asked me.

"I find it very pretty, Mrs. Bossard," I replied, attempting a formality as great as possible; I was resolved to keep all my conversations with her as unemotional as a text-book on geometry.

"I had quite forgotten about the young son of this establishment. He appeared as we walked across the lawn, giving me my initial reminder of his existence. The mother I had considered in prospect as an ambulant black dress; the boy I had ignored. Perhaps there is nothing more fatuous than my imagination!

"Here's Young Dass coming to meet us!" exclaimed Mrs. Bossard. "His name is Dallas," she elaborated, "but Dass is the baby name."

"I know so little about children that it is difficult for me, from their external aspects, to determine even their sex. The estimation of their ages is quite beyond me. I can't tell you how old Young Dass was—I'd put his years anywhere between two and five.

"He approached us dressed in a pale blue sailor suit that he filled out very solidly. His small face, that was intensely pale, bore a stern and unsmiling aspect. He drew up before me and delivered himself of a military salute.

"I smiled at Dass and was about to pat him upon the head, when I observed that his face, turned up to me, bore a terrifying grimace. I noticed then, for the first time, Young Dass's pale, hard eye, that was of the hue of a bleached and frozen corn-flower. In that infantile countenance these merciless eyes had the startling effect of a great incongruity.

"Salute your superior officer," he demanded, speaking his words with an unexpectedly crisp enunciation.

"So genuine was the ring of his command that under the stress of it I did salute him.

"That's better," said Young Dass, still scowling.

"His mother laughed and led me into the house, where she showed me to the room I was to occupy.



"Left alone, I mechanically began to unpack my painting paraphernalia. I was troubled and disturbed. I was the victim of forebodings that lost none of their effect through their vagueness of definition.

"Before supper I took a short walk over the fields. The country charmed me and I made out much promising material. I forgot, for half an hour, the woman who didn't wear black—and Young Dass.

"At supper he sat opposite me. From time to time he broke in upon the conversation with remarks of startling irrelevancy, spoken with what seemed to be his characteristic crispness. His hard eye gleamed like a piece of polished slate. He watched me with an expression that appeared uncomfortably sardonic. In his presence I was uneasy. Now and again some grim and incomprehensible humour seized him, whereupon he laughed with a mirthless sound. His face was as pale as the cloth on the table, and fixed, due to the lowness of his chair and the limitations of his stature, only a few inches above it.

"I could not fathom any significance that Young Dass might have for me, yet he seemed charged with significance. By the armor of a polite frigidity I felt that I was already safe from the young woman who was his mother; I understood completely just what dangers might lie in her direction; she presented no mystery. Yet Young Dass, pallid of face, with his icy, scrutinizing eye, moved me to a profound uneasiness; his youth accentuated the threat of him; he had the effect of a menace. I hurried through my meal and went outdoors.

"The next morning Young Dass did not appear at breakfast. His mother interpreted my look of inquiry.

"'Little Dass didn't want to get up,' she said. 'He seems to feel sick. I hope there's nothing really wrong with him!'

"I said something or other properly conventional and left the house shortly afterward with my sketch box.

"I returned before noon and encountered his mother near the door. She looked quite concerned.

"'He's sick!' she exclaimed.

"'Eh? Young Dass?' I questioned.

"'Come up and look at him,' she said.

"I ascended the stairs with her and we turned into a small room that adjoined her own. On the bed I saw the figure of Young Dass.

"He stared at us when we entered. His face was flushed. His eyes had an increased glitter. On his forehead and about his mouth I noticed a half a dozen small eruptions.

"'Chicken-pox!' exclaimed his mother. 'The doctor's been here!'

"'Chicken-pox!' yelled Young Dass, with sudden and terrifying vigour. 'Yes!! Chicken-pox! Chicken-pox . . . varicella . . . chicken-pox . . . varicella . . . ' and he burst into a mad song, a refrain of these to words, that he voiced like an incantation.

"He subsided then into silence and looked at us no more; in our presence he now seemed as uninterested as an undertaker going to a christening. We withdrew.

"I must confess to you fellows that I then experienced some very ungenerous sensations. I could not work up any pity for Young Dass and I felt nothing but relief. Literally, I was not displeased to have him sick; I felt more comfortable in the knowledge that his cold eye would no longer regard me across the table.

"That evening I had planned to sketch a night scene, but a sudden indisposition confined me to inactivity on the porch. The weather was warm, yet I was cold. A great lassitude possessed me and I was quite incapable of any activity. Presently I went up to my room. As I prepared for bed, I glanced into the mirror and observed that my face was flushed.

"In the morning I awakened with a violently aching head. I attempted to rise, but couldn't manage it. I lay quietly for an hour, perhaps, and then, to attract attention, thumped on the floor with my shoe. I heard Young



Dass's mother ascend the stairs and I called to her.

"She came into the room, stopped, and stared at me in consternation.

"'Good heavens!' she exclaimed. 'You've caught the chicken-pox!'

"She summoned the doctor, who confirmed her surmise.

"'It seems incredible that you should have caught it from the little boy,' he said. 'You've only been here two days. The period of incubation is almost never less than ten.'

"But I, smiling bitterly to myself, was not surprised. It seemed quite in keeping with what I should expect from Young Dass.

"The mere matter of me contracting an absurd case of varicella is rather funny, I suppose—but the complications of it are by no means amusing, provided you fellows possess any sympathy, or any appreciation of what might very well have concluded tragically.

"The doctor had scarcely left when Young Dass's mother knocked at the door. I told her to come in. She entered smiling.

Her brown hair was heaped upon her head like a mass of threaded autumn leaves. Her dark eyes were lustreously and alarmingly soft. She stood over the bed and touched the sheet with a caressing gesture. In one hand she held a book.

"'I thought I'd come in and read to you,' she said. 'Would you like that?'

"I was too dispirited to say anything but yes. She sat down by the bed and began to read. Her voice was low and the words she spoke out of the book had the effect of endearments. I watched her profile in troubled fascination. She was abominably good to look at! I wanted her there—and yet, I wished her far away. Do you understand that? I was afraid!

"She had been reading fifteen or twenty minutes, when the door of my room opened slowly.

"From my position in the bed I could see no reason for its movement—the effect was startlingly sepulchral.

"Young Dass's mother turned and jumped up.

"'Dass!' she exclaimed. 'What are you doing here?'

Wearing a white nightgown, Young Dass emerged at the side of the bed.

"'I'm well now,' he said. 'I don't want to be sick any more.'

"I turned my head and looked at him. His face was again white, spotted only by a half a dozen oval vesicles. He passed his eyes from my countenance to that of his mother; he dropped his glance to the floor and then, slowly throwing back his head, he laughed, mirthlessly, inscrutably.

"'Get right out of here, Dass!' his mother exclaimed.

"He obeyed her, but before he left he looked at me again, turning upon me his slatey eye, that now seemed malevolent, singularly evil.

"I made no such sudden and miraculous recovery as Dass. I was in bed for a week. During that time the woman, his mother, attended me constantly, reading to me in her caressing voice, presenting me with her unluckily pretty face. The days were an admixture of pleasure and absurd terror. I knew that I was unceasingly on the point of some irreparable declaration. I felt my days of liberty in dreadful jeopardy. I was weak; I was down; I was at the mercy of an adverse fortune!

"And each day Young Dass came in to see me and on each of these days his eye appeared to have known a sardonic increase; his glance was charged with subtle insinuation. In my heart I cursed Young Dass—it almost seemed that in his chicken-pox had been some malevolent hoax, a plot and intrigue directed against me.

"But I was finally able to sit up and with my returning strength I felt less fear of the abominable charm of Young Dass's mother. I was able to reassume, in part anyway, the armor of polite impersonality that I had at first worn against her.

"The first morning I went down to



breakfast she came in hurriedly and late.

"'Poor Dass!' she cried.

"'What is it?' I asked.

"'I'm afraid he's going to be sick,' she said.

"She ate her breakfast rapidly and then asked me if I would come upstairs and look at him.

"I followed her above and we went into Young Dass's room. I looked down upon him as he lay on the bed.

"As before, his face was flushed. Occasionally he coughed. His eyes were swollen and red. Under his skin I thought I detected a slight rash.

"I advised his mother to call in the doctor.

"He came and declared that Young Dass was suffering from an attack of measles.

"I was at once assailed with a foreboding and a fear. Measles! It would never do—I determined to pack up my things and leave the next morning.

"But I awoke upon a clouded world. My head felt hot; from moment to moment I sneezed; I was unable to breathe through my nose; my eyes were watery and dim. By pounding on the floor I attracted the attention of the woman and instructed her to telephone to the doctor.

"That person came, examined me, smiled in a sickly way, and said:

"'You've got the measles!'

"On the second day my face blossomed into a rash like a field of red flowers.

"Consider my feelings toward Young Dass! Consider the accentuation of them when, on the third day of his illness, he arose from his bed and declared himself cured! He came into my room and looked at me; he studied me with his adamant eye. I was convinced, utterly, of his malevolence. Had I been physically capable of it I would have done him violence.

"For his mother had redoubled her sympathetic attentions. Each day she sat close to me for hours and I lay motionless, watching her red lips in motion, yielding myself, a little further on

each occasion, to the devilishness of her allure.

"Once I put out my hand, closing my fingers over hers. She bent her eyes upon me, saying nothing. A declaration rushed to my lips and I restrained it by a supremacy of effort that I knew could never be repeated. The next time . . .! She withdrew her hand and turned away from the bedside, sighing.

"But my convalescence was more rapid than I had hoped. Again strength returned and with it, increased resistance. I congratulated myself. I had escaped once more!

"But I determined to put myself in no further danger. I felt that in three or four days I would be strong enough to leave the house. I now suspected Young Dass of collusion and any deviltry. I dreaded the approach of his pallid face and his bleached, ultramarine-and-water eyes. I feared him and despised him.

"Yet, two days before I was ready to go, it was reported to me that Young Dass was unable to get up. In dreadful foreboding I went in to look at him. The doctor had not yet arrived.

"Young Dass complained of pains in his ears. He spoke of twinges when he endeavored to talk. It seemed to me that I could observe a slight swelling between the mastoid process and the ramus of the jaw. . . .

"The doctor came; he pronounced it mumps.

"I was yet too weak to leave the house. Two more days at the least! In despair, I waited. Hourly I expected the slight headache, the sudden pain on mastication, the throb of the eardrums, the last and dreadful swelling. I was now hopeless. I knew that to successfully weather another siege would be impossible to me. I heard the soft, caressing voice reading to me and saw the motions of red, appealing lips. Abominable allure! Abominable charm, that threatened my precious liberty!

"And so I waited. The first day passed—I thought I felt some premon-



itory twinges. But I wasn't sure. The morning came—I raised my hand to my neck, felt it carefully—it was un-enlarged!

"My breakfast was brought up to me by the young girl who attended to the kitchen; later in the day I went below and sat on the porch, spending the hours in uneasy waiting.

"When I went to bed nothing definite had developed.

"The following morning I awoke in terror. I must have just come out of a dream in which I figured with a stiff neck. But there was no such actuality. I arose, dressed, and for the first time since contracting the measles went down for breakfast. There I was quite astonished to encounter Young Dass, his face encircled by a white cloth, drawn up into two rabbit's ears at the top.

"'I'm tired of bed,' he said.

"His mother had not yet put in an appearance.

"Again Dass sat opposite me at the table and I watched him with sensations of hate and uneasiness. In a few hours I would be ready to escape—and yet it seemed to me that his precocious deviltry would inevitably circumvent me!

"And, again, the thought of my parting from his mother stirred me with uneasiness. I was afraid of that which I might say or do then. I knew that the consciousness of her charm was strongly in my veins. I realized that my escape, provided the opportunity of it remained open, was not all simplicity.

"Meanwhile, I wondered at the absence of his mother. Presently the kitchen girl brought in the breakfast.

"'When you've finished it, Mr.

Chambers,' she said, 'the Mrs. says she'd like to see you upstairs.'

"I ate hurriedly, occupied with a sense of wonder. Leaving my coffee only half consumed, I hurried above.

"I found Young Dass's mother in her room. She looked up at me from a chair piled with cushions. Her expression was wan.

"'I'm taking the mumps,' she said in a strangled voice.

"I looked at her. I almost—unkindly enough—laughed in her face! Her appearance was vastly amusing. Her features were puffed and under her chin and over her head passed a ludicrous white bandage. Allure? The woman was no more alluring than a fish-wife. Charm? She didn't affect me in the least.

"I hurried out of her room and exhausted myself on the stairs in silent laughter. As I sat weakly on the top step, Young Dass commenced the ascent from below.

"I looked down upon his yellow head. He drew close to me and stood in front of me. I gazed into his infantile blue eye. I found nothing sardonic, nothing malevolent there. For me, Young Dass was exonerated from any special malignity.

"'Dass,' I said, reaching into my pocket, 'here is a quarter for you. Why did you give your mother the mumps?'

"'I didn't,' said Dass. 'She took them!'"

\* \* \*

Chambers ceased speaking and looked about him. In the air sounded a resonant hum, the harmonious commingling of bass, baritone and tenor elements, like the vibrant noise of a defective water-pipe. He glanced from figure to figure, surprised. Each member of the club was musically sleeping.





# DARLING

By James Stephens

*Author of "The Crock of Gold," "Here Are Ladies," "Mary, Mary," etc.*

OLD FOUR EYES was quite young. That is, he was about thirty-three or four years of age, but there are people who are born middle-aged, and he was one of them. He was called "old" for that reason, and he was called "Four Eyes" because he wore spectacles. Maybe he was born with spectacles on also.

He had attained to all the dignity which the average man can ever hope for, that is, he was married and he had a situation. In the latter of these dignities he had attained to the emolument beyond which the average man does not dare to covet; that is, he had thirty-five shillings a week.

He had married his wife very largely because there was no one else who could so easily be married, and she, after attending quite a respectable time, had married him because no one better turned up.

They were both of the people who consider that it is much better to marry than to burn. It was not that any particular urgency of the blood drove them into each other's arms, for they could not have mustered one infantile passion between the two of them. It was that, in their conventions, one married at a certain time after leaving school. It is one of the things one does. They lived on the same tram line; they went to the same church; they attended the same semi-clerical or lay clerical meetings and missions which every church fosters; they were thus continually meeting and at last saluting, and at long last, through the introduction of a clergyman, speaking. He saw her

home once; he saw her home again; then he always saw her home.

Why did they go to church? It was not to praise God—they would not have known how to do such a thing. It was not to pray—their characters were not strong enough for such an exercise of intellect and will. They went to church because they had gone there when they were children; because it was the proper thing to do; because church and its implications formed a society in which they could mix, and which rescued them from the feeling of individuality and detachment which can so easily become a sense of utter loneliness and despair.

When two young people have convoyed each other home in the late hours they must do the right thing; that is, they must get married—and so these two got married. Love! There was none of it. Even affection does not seem to be necessary for such a coupling. Of course they had both read the right books, and from these had gleaned that love existed and that affection was a postulate for matrimony. To be loving was, therefore, the right thing to be, and they loved as in duty bound. They said "darling" to each other frequently, and, although less frequently, they clasped each other's hands. Everything was in order, the rules were obeyed to the last one, and they got married.

They had a wedding party—they both saved up for it from their very meagre wages—and to the wedding a dozen people of their own tribe were invited and were regaled on lemonade



and buns; there were other and more notable meats than these. The proper speeches were made; the proper toasts were drained in bubbling and hissing glasses. Everything, they told each other afterwards, went off splendidly, and they went away to a seaside place for six days. Then they returned to the small house they had taken and furnished on the instalment system and thus they were man and wife and the one flesh.

For a week or two they were almost excited. Their meals were no longer solitary. Each night they shared a supper and a bed. They walked arm in arm to church twice every Sunday, and thus enlinked they walked back together and did not separate on arriving at a door. When the morning tea was prepared, she would call out, "Breakfast is ready, darling," and when he was going to work he would say, "Did you notice where I left my hat, darling?"

She did not go to work any more, for that was not the thing, and when he came home in the evening he listened dutifully to the conversation which she had accumulated during a companionless day.

Indeed he sometimes thought she talked for longer than was necessary about the way the kitchen tap dripped. When it was turned off it did not entirely turn off. At first he admired and envied her ease in speech, for he could not at all have uttered so many words about a water tap. He marveled at her. Each night brought its own subject. It might be about the fading oilcloth on the hall; it might be about cockroaches in the basement; it might be that the silk in her wedding-present umbrella had slit. On these subjects, on all and every subject, she was able to emit unceasing and perfectly grammatical words. He sat with her in the parlor and harkened diligently to her tale. He would lie silent in the bed and, long after the candle had been blown out, he would stretch beside her in the darkness and would listen, listen, listen. He could not help

listening, and the thin sound of his wife's voice began to beat on his ears as something monstrously dull, as an eternal, inexplicable complaint. He almost regretted having got married.

He had a long-haired, thin-grown moustache; he had a badly cut nose; he had dull-blue eyes which stared, as though he were listening with them instead of with his ears; he had as little chin as could be without having any chin at all; his ears swung slightly outwards; the ends of his trousers flopped about his ankles, and from the flop and wobble of these garments one knew that his legs were as skinny as matches; one divined that his elbows were sharp enough to wear a hole through his coat, and that his feet were longish and flat-tish and that his toes mounted energetically on the top of each other.

One knew that he was less protected against life than a snail is. One knew that one could do anything one pleased to him without fear, and that, unless the thing done was terribly public, he would not even complain. His wife knew it, but she had only blood enough for the little, bitter dislike which flowed from her in a thin, bitter, unceasing sound of words.

He liked everyone in the world; he liked everything in the world. He liked anything. That, if he had an ambition, was all his ambition, to be let like people, to placate people and let them see that he liked them. Never was such a handshake as he gave. It seemed he would never again let go one's fingers. Never did eyes beam on one with such entire assurance that here was good will; that here was one who would be gratified by your good fortune; that here was one who would laugh and perform antics like a dog if that would give you pleasure; that here was one who implored you not to do him harm.

Life flowed on. Three years of the slab of nonsense which he called life went by, and he was alive, a little bonier than before, but with an imperceptible growth of boniness that left him unchanged to himself. He was more eager than ever when he clasped your



hand in both of his own, and clung to it as thinking that here might be safety. On your approach he wagged his tail with so woeful an energy, and his dumb eyes implored you to take him away with you and feed him; to tie him up, if you had the heart to do so, but to take him away with you and not let him stray any longer.

For he was terribly afraid. He had lost all hope, and he saw the end coming to him irresistible as death; he saw the calamity and disaster to which he was fated coming on him implacably, and he wanted to be let off; he wanted a corner where he could lay his bones on straw and blink at the sun. For he was tired; he could no longer work as he used to work. His wife's voice, that unceasing, bitter little drone came between him and his work; it drowned all his thoughts; it destroyed the mere mechanical remembrance which was his work; he could no longer be certain that his tots at the end of the ledger were right; he could not remember the thing which he was told to remember for tomorrow, for she droned into his ear in the middle of the column of figures, and she buzzed at him while his superior was giving him instructions.

The other men began to play pranks on him. They filled his ink-bottle with lumps of blotting paper, so that when he lifted out the pen he would put a two-inch blot on the ledger; they stole his cup at the lunch hour and he found in its place a cup full of red ink; they turned his desk upside down, tore his papers, bashed in his hat, spread gum on his chair. They did everything to him which careless, malevolent minds can think of, knowing that as he did not know who to complain of, he would never complain.

Things began to get unbearable; not unbearable for him, for until death came he could bear anything. Things began to get unbearable for his masters. They did not know who played the pranks, but they knew all about the pranks, and his incompetence became more evident, so their speech to him became more short, their looks more dis-

satisfied. In the face of these things he could return and return, but he could not battle; he could oppose there nothing but his eagerness to please and his dumb eyes.

He saw his dismissal coming, and with it he saw the end of life, the fading away of the green earth and the going out of the sun. He strove against his dismissal with humility, and further than his abjectness humility itself could not go. It was a thing of shame, and God knows he was ashamed. It was obscene, and perhaps God counted his tears as they slid burning and trickling along that gaunt nose into his moustache.

He was dismissed, and he stood before his master as a sheep might stand before its butcher. He listened without a word and went away without a word.

His wife droned and droned and droned. But now it was not only in the night time, that dark cavern of thin, unintermitting sound; she had all the day to talk in and all the night, and both the day and the night were filled by her with words.

He fled from the house. He walked up streets and down streets, pushing open shop doors, office doors, and doors of stables and yards, seeking employment, carrying his frightened eyes and his humility into every sort of place and every kind of company. But he might as well have asked for employment from the winds and the waters. There was no employment for him on the earth. There was no place for him under the wide canopy of heaven.

The little money he had managed to save vanished away; the people from whom he had hired his furniture came with a van and took it away again; his wife went away to live with a cousin until she could find work. For a few days and nights he roved about the empty house eating stale crusts that he found, drinking water from the tap, sleeping on the rubbish-littered floor. Then one morning the landlord knocked and asked for the keys. He gave them



and the landlord saw him off the premises. He was in the street, and he had nothing in the world but a pair of spectacles. He stared through them at the

clouds; he looked at the clouds fixedly as he paced forward, thinking that maybe he would see God through his spectacles.



## HOW LITTLE KNOWS THE CALIPH

By Willard Wattles

ABOVE a street in Bagdad set in the solid wall  
There is a latticed window where the checkered sunbeams fall,

A little latticed window that looks upon the street,—  
And down between the houses comes a lad on sun-browned feet.

Oh, is he from the mountains high, or is he from the sea,  
For never caliph trod in state on step so light as he,

Or is he only shepherd boy come in with goats to town,  
With lips of the pomegranate flower and pillared throat of brown?

Oh, quick and drop it at his feet, the spicy cassia bud,  
And I shall know if ghost he be, or vintaged warm with blood.

Oh, quick and swing the little door that is so straight and small . . .  
I weary of my lattices set in a solid wall.

Oh, he has climbed the musty stair, and passed the darkened door,  
And kissed the aching from my lips that were numb before.

I did not know that love could be so merciful as this,  
Or that a slender shepherd boy could hold so close and kiss,

For now I lie in jeweled arms and marvel hour by hour  
How little knows the caliph of my red pomegranate flower.



NO woman is ever really quite "at her best." In her mind there always remains some resource of charm or beauty that is still untapped.



THE woman who has developed an enigmatic, subtle smile needs no other weapon in her conquests.





# THE HAPPY HANGMAN

By Harold Brighthouse

*Author of "Hobson's Choice," etc.*

## I

THERE was a king in Naples then and Beppo was his hangman. None of your shamefaced dogs, but as hearty a fellow as ever sent a criminal to Kingdom Come with sound hemp and farewell joke. He hanged like a Christian and a sinner because but for a piece of luck he should have been hanged himself and it made him soft and kindly at his work.

They caught him one day at the trade he used to ply before they made a hangman of him. He was then a pick-pocket by profession and the fat merchant whose purse he cut could well afford the trifling loss. But the merchant fell to shouting and raised such a devil of a hullabaloo in the street of Naples that Beppo was caught, though he ran like a hare, for as soon as ten pursuers were winded, twenty with fresh lungs took up the chase, and a man cannot outrun a multitude.

The sniffing wretch who couldn't lose a purse without crying out about it haled him before the magistrates and Beppo was sentenced to the gallows. When they sent for the hangman to come and do his duty, the officer, worn with overwork, was saying his last prayer with the priest and inconveniently died. So they offered Beppo what they called a choice. He could turn hangman and hang others, or he could hang. He preferred to hang others.

It is nearly as unpopular to hang as to be hanged, and Beppo found himself cold-shouldered by his old acquaintances, many of whom feared, with cause, to be one day the raw material

of his handicraft. He saved his skin at a price which was heavy on a companionable man, but he hanged the fellows who cut him in the wineshops with Christian pleasantness. A less charitable man would have been churlish with the noose.

If constant occupation makes a man happy, Beppo had luck, for necks fell to his rope like mellow apples on a windy day. There were hangings, and to spare, in Naples then, and fees for Master Beppo, and perquisites as well. He was heir-at-law to whatever the felons had upon them, which, since the warders had first opportunity and nimble fingers, was nothing but their clothes. Still, the clothes were often merchantable and more rarely wearable, and on the surface there were compensations in his trade. But where is the use of fees if a man must drink alone, or of fine clothes when the girls won't look at him who wears them? Beppo was tired of hanging, and that's the truth of it.

Besides, there was the matter of Nita. Nita belonged, in a sort of way, to a successful thief called Pietro, and Beppo reckoned himself the better man, which might be truth or only arrogance in a mere pickpocket who had, moreover, turned hangman.

But when Pietro was careless enough to be caught knifing Nita's husband and Beppo hanged him, he did his office with peculiar kindness, for he was thinking of Nita. That was his mistake. A man should keep his thoughts upon his work. Straying thoughts mean botched work.

Having hanged him, Beppo drew his fee, changed into Pietro's clothes,



which were good and fitted him, and went to see Nita.

She was lying asleep in an upper room with a window that looked out on the sun-filled courtyard, and the sight of her was good. She was like a ripe orange, with a flush beneath her dark skin where the blood ran in her, and at the thought of kissing those lips Beppo was twice a man. She was of Naples, and that says all, except that she was beautiful beyond the wont even of Neapolitans. She lay in her bed under a bright red clock, tired because she had been up all night in order to get a front place at the hanging of her lover.

Beppo leant over her and she murmured "My Pietro" in her sleep.

"It's easy to see where your thoughts run o' nights," he said. "Pietro's hanged."

She stirred and woke and saw him in Pietro's clothes. Again she said "Pietro," and he laughed.

"But you—" she said, shrinking across the bed from him. "Your clothes. They are Pietro's."

"My clothes are mine," he said.

"They're his. I say they're his. See! Here I mended them."

"What!" said Beppo, disappointed. "Mended clothes!" Then he examined the elbow to which she pointed and found that the mend was neat. "Still, they are mended well. I'm glad to know you have the housewife's arts."

"Who are you? Who are you who come with his clothes on your back?"

"His heir. Heir to his clothes and heir to his—to you. Shall we sit down and talk?"

She recognized him then and shuddered back against the wall.

"You are the hangman."

"You have sharp eyes," he said, well pleased. "It needs sharp eyes to see my face through the mask I wear when I perform my duty to the State. I like you more and more."

He went to her, and saw her cringe from him.

"Come, mistress," he argued, reasonably, "I am a man like other men. A

state official, it is true, but I am not on duty now. Sit by me and discover my humanity. Have you no wine to offer me?"

She eyed him defiantly. "There's nothing here for you."

"There's you."

"But not for long," she said, and made a quick rush to the door.

Beppo was quicker and he caught her before she opened it. Wanting her breath for other purposes, she did not scream. She bit his hand and he liked her spirit, but he mastered her and threw her from him into the room, locking the door and smiling gently at her. She thought of the window, but the well was deep and she shuddered back from it.

"Yes, it's a long jump, Nita," he said, looking for himself. "A man like me might jump it and survive, but not a little girl."

She stood there panting.

"You make it very plain you did not love Pietro," he remarked. "He died repentant like a worthy son of Holy Church. You should show your gratitude to me that sent him to a better place than this."

"Does that help me on earth?" she asked.

"I'm here to do that," he said. "Did you say you had no wine?"

Hatred still smouldered in her eyes, but she had wine and got it. She put worlds of contempt into her gesture as she poured it to the cup, but, sullenly, she poured.

"Only one cup?" he asked. "Then we must share it as lovers should. Drink, Nita," he invited her.

"Yes—if my lips could poison you."

He laughed. "But since they won't?"

"You drink alone."

He drank, toasting her eyes. "It is a hangman's fate to drink alone. Men shun me in the wineshops and women look the other way when I pass by. I'm pining for companionship. Hanging's a necessary trade, but lonely, and therefore I come to you to ease my loneliness by sharing it. The fees, I might remark, are good."



"Blood-money."

"Oh, if you like," he said, "but the coins are round like any others and more gold than most. See. This is what I earned today."

He fingered gold merrily on the table, and she struck him in the face. He relished the tingle of it and the mischief in her eye.

"You hellish scum! Would you tempt me with the very coin you got for taking Pietro's life?"

"Hoho," he mocked, "I tempt you, then? We'll argue this, my pretty. For instance, why was Pietro hanged? Because he killed your husband and you clung to him for it. For the same reason you should cling to me, because I killed Pietro."

"Pietro killed my husband in the heat of anger. They fought for me with knives and the best man won. You killed Pietro in cold blood as a— a duty to the State."

"True," he argued, "I performed my duty to the State, and I assure you I'd perform my duties as your husband with the same success."

That gave her pause. She had no anger now. "My husband!"

He was very moral then. "Certainly a husband, Nita. A state official has to be respectable!"

"Marry a hangman!" she said contemptuously, but weighed it shrewdly, liking the shape of him.

"You can forget my trade. And you will find me faithful."

"No doubt of that. Women don't want a man like you." Which was not whole truth. They wanted, but they did not dare.

"And men," he pointed out, "will think the same of you. Your record's dangerous. Two men, your husband and Pietro, have died on your account. It takes courage to be the third."

"Oh," she scoffed, "you woo me bravely."

"On the contrary, I have not begun to woo. So far I have appealed to argument."

"To insult," she suggested.

"Only to truth," he amended. "If

you were ugly I might lie. I might pretend that you were beautiful, but it is not necessary to lie to you. You're beautiful. I want you for your beauty and because I love you. I never hanged a man with greater kindness than I hanged Pietro."

"You were not cold about it, then?" she asked eagerly.

"Cold? My fingers trembled, I who have hanged a man a week for years. I hanged him with a rival's sentiment. I lusted to cut his bonds and set him free to fight with me for you."

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Beppo."

"Beppo," she repeated lingeringly, filling the wine-cup.

"Ah, on your lips it sounds the name of names. I never knew it was a fragrant name before."

She drank and offered him the cup. "Drink where I have kissed the cup."

He looked at her with question in his eyes and saw the answer in hers. Swiftly he drank, then sat and put her on his knee. They kissed and kissed as if their lips could never part.

"Now I can defy the world. Let come what may, I have held you in my arms and had your lips to mine."

"I've dreamed of finding love like this," she said.

There was the sudden sound of horses in the courtyard and the strangeness of it in that quarter of the town came first to her who lived there. She fretted in his clasp.

"Sit still," he bade her. "Horses are not so strange as that we've found each other," and she sank back happily. They kissed again and made love and cooed into each other's ears.

"I love your roughness and the strength that mastered me."

"I have not lived till now. Today I am alive. No longer lonely and outcast, but a man who's found his mate, greater than other men because the mate is you; a giant for I have your love: inviolate because you love me—"

A knocking came at the door, and Beppo did not care. His world was in the room.



"Go on," he mocked, "knock till your knuckles ache. Shout till your bellows burst."

They knocked again and called his name, alarming Nita.

"They know you're here," she said.

"I know you're here," he said. "That's all I've room to know."

"Open," they cried, "in the name of the law."

The law? He heard a greater call than law. He heard the call of love and happiness. They could shout, those pigmies of the world. He snapped his fingers at them, looking at Nita, who was his world.

"Beppo, am I to break the door down? You know my voice—Calandro of the jail. I've news for you."

"News of the jail," he roared back. "News of the damned. Take it to hell and tell it there. This is a part of Paradise."

Another voice came from behind the locked door, and at it Nita flinched and slipped from Beppo's arms.

"*That voice!*" she said, and her face was bloodless and she shivered.

"Give me the key." He gave it her. She had no need to ask twice in such a tone. She opened the door.

With Calandro, jailer, was the hanged lover of Nita, in a nightshirt.

## II

SHE screamed at sight of him and shrank away. Beppo himself gave back a step. It was new in his experience for hanged men to walk.

"Are you a ghost?" he asked.

"As cold as one," said Pietro. "Give me my clothes."

At that Calandro interposed and explained. "Beppo, you hanged him like a bungler"—that was the worst of a servant of the law indulging his private passion: hangmen should be dispassionate—"we took the body in the usual way to the doctors and on the road the fellow stirred. By the time we were at the hospital, he sat up. The doctors gave him cordial, and, as you see, the man's recovered."

"And waiting to be covered," said Pietro. "Give me my clothes."

The right of the matter seemed with Pietro, not to mention the charity. A man who has survived hanging and a ride through the streets in a hospital nightshirt deserves clothes, especially his own clothes. They were the hangman's perquisite on the theory that the hanged had no further use for them, and Pietro had a use. Pietro was cold.

"It's simple impudence to claim your perquisite after fumbling your job like this," he said.

"You're the last man to complain of that," said Beppo.

"Am I? Why, but for your lubberliness I'd now be on the way to Paradise. The priest told me himself he'd never witnessed a better repentance."

"Then come and be hanged again," suggested the botcher. "I promise you I'll not be careless twice." He opened the door in invitation.

The jailer intervened.

"That is the point which the lawyers are now considering," he said. "Pietro was sentenced to be hanged, and he has been hanged."

"Not thoroughly."

"No. It's a nice question. As I am myself a humble student of the law, I can see that the problem bristles with difficulties. Can a man be hanged twice for the same crime? Is Pietro, having been hanged, properly a man at all? Has he legal existence? And, if not, can he be said to exist in any shape? Ought he to be quietly killed and hidden away as an unnatural monstrosity? Or ought he to be ignored and permitted to live? Can we restore civil rights to a man who is legally dead, or is he an outlaw? Is he—"

Pietro tired of the pedantry of the law.

"I'll tell you what I am," he said. "I'm cold."

"I am not even certain," said Calandro, "that you have the right to feel cold, but by the clemency of the Council you are allowed to claim your clothes."



"Is he?" said Beppo. "Claiming is one thing. Receiving is another."

"I should not advise you to be arrogant, Beppo," said Calandro quietly. "Your own position is also under consideration by the lawyers. They are deliberating what is to be done with a hangman who makes a fool of the law. You have given them a very pretty problem, my friend."

"Then they ought to be grateful."

"Oh, they are. They revel in a complicated case. But it may be necessary to hang you at the end of their revels."

"To hang me?" asked Beppo, taken aback. "But why?"

The jailer was sympathetic.

"Personally, I should regret it," he said. "But don't you realize that you have brought the law into contempt? The law relies upon your skill in hanging and you have betrayed the law. No doubt it was an accident, but there is no place in law for accidents. I can only tell you that I left the Council laughing very heartily when an old equity lawyer suggested that the best plan was to make Pietro hangman in your place to see if he could not make a better job of hanging you than you have made of him."

"So as the matter stands," said Pietro, "we're both in danger of our lives."

The legalist considered it. "One of you is in danger of his life, but which one is a matter not decided yet."

Pietro looked at Beppo like a friend. They belonged to the rascal's side of the fence, Calandro to the other. For a purpose they could form alliance.

"Hangman," he said, "this fellow's tedious."

"He splits too many hairs," Beppo agreed, seizing Calandro. They two could settle this without the law, and put the door between them and the law.

Calandro in the passage howled out threats and called on Beppo to keep the peace. He reminded him that he was an officer of the law. Beppo resigned his office through the door.

"You can't resign," said Calandro. "You're appointed for life."

Beppo laughed, and the jailer went for help. Pietro turned the key in the door with an ugly look that Beppo did not see because he was pouring wine for Pietro. He had not perceived that the alliance, made for a purpose, was already broken and the allies turned enemies.

"Pietro," he said fraternally, "for a man that's had your escape, you're in a gloomy mood. Cheer up! Here's wine to help you."

Pietro knocked the wine-cup from his hand. "I do not drink with hangmen," he said.

"Mere prejudice," said Beppo, too used to that affront to be angry. "And, if it comes to that, you're in jeopardy of turning hangman yourself."

Pietro ignored it and restated his claim.

"My breeches!" he demanded. "I am cold."

"My breeches," corrected Beppo.

"Ours, if you like, but give them me to wear."

"No. That admits your ownership, which I deny."

"Oh," said Pietro whimsically. "I'll admit your ownership, if you'll admit my legs."

"I stand upon my right," said Beppo, loftily.

Pietro corrected that.

"You stand upon my boots," he said, "but if you have no mind to do a charitable act—"

"Charity!" cried Beppo. "Why in God's name should I feel charitable to a man who's put my life in peril by declining to die?"

"Then," said Pietro, "will you take a sportsman's chance and spin a coin for it?"

"You will lose," he said. "I warn you I'm lucky today."

"The same with me," said Pietro, "which makes the matter more interesting. My luck brought me past the gallows and should carry me to a pair of breeches. You'll find a copper in the left-hand pocket."

The light-fingered turnkeys had the



copper, but Beppo produced gold and Pietro eyed it queerly.

"Transmuted, eh?" he said. "I have the discretion not to ask about the process, but I may guess you have not fairly earned that gold. I'm still alive. I call it heads," he added as Beppo tossed the coin.

Tails fell, and Pietro took it with philosophy.

"Lucky at play, unlucky at love," he quoted. "That for yourself, Hangman. Meantime, I like the color of this cloak. Blood also is red."

He took the bright cloak from the bed and gathered it round him. "Now to our quarrel."

### III

BEPPPO'S eyes confessed his admiration. Here was a fellow who had spent the night in the condemned cell, had gone through the strain of a last confession, been hanged, carried naked to the hospital, and from there as good as naked to this house, and still had fight in him. Small wonder he survived the noose. It was magnificent, but it was absurd, for Beppo had kissed Nita. He was uplifted and indomitable, but he could pity Pietro, who had lost what he had gained, and the winning of the toss awoke the gambling fever. As he gambled for the breeches, he would gamble for Nita, to spare Pietro the pains of a losing fight.

So far they had ignored Nita, who kept herself apart, and Beppo put the matter tactfully. He made play with the coin again.

"If there is anything between us two," he said, "which the toss has not decided, let us call a second time."

It is decent to be tactful about breeches: a mistress is another matter.

"If there is anything," cried Pietro. "Did you imagine I'd forgotten where we found you, with Nita who tries to hide and skulks there in the shade?"

She came between them angrily. "I have not hidden in the shade. Your squabble for a suit of clothes was no affair of mine."

"We've finished that," he said, "and can begin with you. Nita, you love too lightly. You thought me cold this bare half hour and welcomed the hangman."

Beppo was watching her. He wanted to see how she would rise to this occasion of a lover returned from the gallows, spewed out by Hell, and he liked the challenge of her. She stood poised on the balls of her feet, swaying a little with arms akimbo in the attitude which is either a coarse virago's or a thing of grace, and Nita did it with an air that pleased him. She had spunk, this woman of his.

"I'm free to welcome whom I choose," she said defiantly.

Pietro raised his fist, but let it drop again, surprised because she did not flinch. She used to flinch, and then he used to strike.

"While I'm alive you're mine," he said. "By every right of God and man, you're mine. I've loved you and I've fought for you. I've killed for you. This carrion here has failed to kill me, though he had me pinioned and only had to put a rope around my neck and pull it tight."

"For all that, you were less helpless than I was," said Beppo, and Pietro stared at him. "Cords do not bind a man as tightly as a woman's eyes. I've never failed to hang a man before. I failed this time because I cared. I saw her and I hated you. I let my private feelings get the better of my skill. Put me before you, man to man, knives in our hands, and I will undertake to give you as good account of you as you gave of Luigi for her sake."

"You're boasting, Hangman."

"No," smiled Beppo, more at Nita than at him, as if they two had a secret beyond the comprehension of the other, "neither a boaster nor a hangman now. I resign my office to you."

"It's almost worth it, for the pleasure of hanging you."

"Only," said Beppo, "I shall not stay here to be hanged. My next appointment is not with Death. It is with Love."

"You'll miss it, then."



But Beppo only smiled. "No living man can hurt me now."

"Son of a bachelor, you boast. No living man, you say? The lawyers sit to learn if I'm alive or not. Perhaps, Hangman, I am not a living man." And Pietro snatched from the table the only knife it held.

Beppo went to the window. The height was giddy but he saw with satisfaction that Calandro had left the second horse in the courtyard. He thought it looked a likely racer. He thought of freedom and the frontier and the knife in Pietro's hand did not trouble him.

Pietro sprang and Nita shrieked in time. The aim was for his stomach, but Beppo turned and caught the eager hand and squeezed it till the knife fell from the bloodless fingers and rattled on the floor. Pietro twisted like an eel and tried to trip his adversary. They fell, and the table with them, and grappled for each others' throats. A man of parts, this Pietro, who after all could make Beppo call out his strength.

Fierce knocks were heard at the door and then Calandro called, like a fool, "Beppo, you are to surrender to the law. It orders you to die and Pietro is your executioner!"

Beppo laughed loud. He was too busy to come and be killed. Nor was he killing, though he might have done.

Pietro won too much regard for that. He rose, and when he rose Pietro rose with him, struggling but helpless, and was held on high until such time as Beppo needed him.

"Go to the window, Nita," he commanded her as the men outside began to break the door.

Wise generals throw out a scout, but Calandro lacked strategy and entered first through the shattered panels. Beppo threw something at him, hard. He threw Pietro, and a tangled mass seemed mixed forever on the floor. The warders skirted it and made for Beppo.

With Nita in his arms, he jumped and fell into the courtyard, a madman's leap, but rose immune.

Calandro scrambled to his feet.

"He's killed himself," he said, and went to look.

A happy laugh saluted him. Beppo had Nita on the horse and the sound of galloping hooves rang through the room. Quickly the sound was lost.

Pietro kept his wits. In a chase he, too, might balk the law.

"After them! After them!" he cried, struggling with the guards.

"No," said Calandro, "hold him fast. The lawyers must hear of this and sit again." He scratched his head with a fat hand. "I wonder what they will do now?"



**I**F a woman smiles at a man, he thinks she is enamoured by him. If a man smiles at a woman, she thinks he suspects her.



**T**HE only kind of letters a woman likes to receive from a man are those that should not be written.





# LOVE SONG

By George B. Jenkins, Jr

I HAVE read love-stories,  
By Lilith Benda, Mary J. Holmes, Theodore Dreiser, Chas. Garvice,  
Harry Leon Wilson, Robert W. Chambers, W. L. George, and a host  
of others,  
And, as I have read them, I have thought,  
"This writer has loved, and suffered,  
Otherwise, how could he (or she) delineate passion so accurately?"

I have read love-poems,  
By Shakespeare, Harry Kemp, Sir Richard Lovelace, Robert W. Service,  
Swinburne, John McClure, Albert Symons, and innumerable more,  
And, as I have read them, I have thought,  
"This writer has loved, and gloried in its ecstasy.  
Otherwise, how could he (or she) sing such beautiful praises of his (or her)  
beloved?"

I love you, Dearest,  
And all those scribblers who have been writing about love,  
They don't begin to describe it, baby, they don't *begin* to describe it!



# LADY OF DELIGHT

By John McClure

THAT time between the winter and the spring  
When winds are wanton and the joyous earth,  
Drunken with daisies and with birds a-wing,  
Smiles in her labour, bringing buds to birth—  
That time I found you, and my heart became—  
Sudden as laughter—full of merry dreams,  
Full of merry fancies, music like a flame,—  
Music that shall die not, better than it seems!  
Then grew I merry, and am merry still  
Like the periwinkles whose name is like a song,—  
I am very gay, my dear, and I think I will  
Nevermore be solemn my life long.  
I am very gay, by day and night,  
Gay to have found you, lady of delight!





# THE LYRIC LOVE AFFAIR OF LUCIEN LA CROSS

By Margaret E. Sangster

I

HE used to see her, almost every day, on the five-thirty-five. A slender bit of a girl, she was, with fluffy blond hair and great brown eyes, and hats that showed a tendency to dip down—just at the most interesting moment—and hide her face. And always, for she arrived at the train before Lucien—who caught trains on the narrowest sort of a margin—she could be found sitting in the very same seat, busily writing on a fat yellow pad with the stubbiest of pencils.

Lucien La Cross had gone through some twenty-five years of life without discovering that he possessed an imagination. But somehow, after watching the girl for a preliminary two weeks, Lucien discovered that he was mildly curious about her. He had just made that discovery when the girl, looking up, bit at the end of her stubby pencil and smiled—albeit absently. Lucien La Cross sitting across the narrow aisle, felt a peculiar warmth in the region of his heart (or, at least, he thought he did). And he immediately discovered that he was wildly curious instead of mildly curious. And then the dropping hat-brim came down and hid the absent little smile.

The next night Lucien tried to arrive, early, at the five-thirty-five. But the girl was there, first, busily writing. Lucien, hesitating in the doorway, decided that he would sit in the seat directly behind her, instead of in the one across the aisle. Having a recently discovered bump of curiosity, he

couldn't help wondering what she wrote about.

The girl was absorbed in her work. Lucien, by leaning forward, saw that she was writing short lines, and that each one began with a capital letter.

Lucien decided that it was poetry, and gave a sigh of unbelief. The girl looked too sane to be a writer of poetry! Diligently he tried to read his paper, but his curiosity was too intense. He folded the paper and leaned forward as far as he dared, until he could read the scribbled lines.

*The weary world was drenched in snow,  
(he read)*

*The howling wolves crept gauntly  
near—*

*I shuddered—but I clasped you close—  
Your sigh came faintly to my ear . . .*

*"The weary world—"*

Lucien La Cross broke off disgustedly. For it was a vividly clear day—and warm! Why should anyone write such—Lucien La Cross was going to say rot—but just then a strand of fluffy blond hair trailed softly out from under the drooping brim of the great hat, and Lucien made up poetry himself—quite unconsciously—until the train stopped at his station.

With a backward glance at the girl, who went to some farther-along station, Lucien left the train. The girl continued to write.

*The weary world was drowned in  
tears— (she wrote);  
You nestled—*



## II

LUCIEN LA CROSS, in the daytime, did routine work in a large factory. He was well paid, and clever, and his position was a position to be set-up about, but nevertheless Lucien La Cross was slightly more than an efficient cog in a well-greased machine. Perhaps that was why Lucien had never come in contact with a great deal of poetry. And yet Lucien—the efficient cog—took to buying magazines and bringing them home with him. He bought æsthetic magazines that made a point of going in for poetry, because he felt sure that a blond girl with great brown eyes would have her verses published only in such magazines. He looked, but vainly, for a poem beginning, “The weary world was drenched in snow—” Also for others that he had glimpsed on succeeding -nights—others that told of

*Mutely wailing eyes of flame,—and  
April, decked with vagrant blossoms,  
and  
Arms that lure me, touch me, clutch  
me—  
Arms as white and warm as—*

Lucien had, in that instance, lost the last word, for the girl wrote a most illegible hand! He tried to think of something white and warm, comparable to arms, but he couldn't.

And then, one day, the unexpected happened. For, coming into the train, Lucien found that every seat was occupied—every seat but one. And in the other half of that seat a girl was sitting—a girl who wrote busily on a yellow pad with a stubby pencil.

With a mumbled word that was half apology, Lucien slid into the seat and buried his head in the folds of his newspaper. A just out, vellum-bound quarterly of verse lay on his knees. How should he know that, under the girl's yellow pad, there lurked a very popular magazine, vividly covered? How should he know that said volume

would have set his mind quite at rest in regard to “arms as white and warm as—”?

The girl wrote fast and interestedly. And habit is an insistent thing. As the train, puffing great wreaths of black smoke, drew out of the station yards, Lucien darted a glance at the yellow pad. There was a new poem on it—

*I, all alone in the dark of my solitude—  
Long for the kisses of yore that I knew!  
Wrote the girl flamboyantly—  
I, in the anguish and hush of my tower  
room,  
Long for the dearness, the nearness, of  
you!*

Lucien read it and was beginning on the second stanza when he became conscious that the rapidly moving, though stubby pencil, had paused. And then, all at once, a slender hand flashed down over the writing on the yellow pad. Lucien, looking up, gazed into two large, indignant brown eyes. He started to speak, thought better of it, and buried his head again in his newspaper.

The next night Lucien sat again in the seat behind the girl. He slipped in noiselessly, but the girl, who had really been quite aware of Lucien for some weeks, knew that he was there. And when, by the rustling of his paper, she knew that he was leaning forward to read over her shoulder, she wrote:

*How, I wonder, can I have  
Privacy—  
With a boob, directly back,  
Watching me?*

There was another verse, but Lucien La Cross did not read it. With scarlet ears and anger gnawing furiously in the region of his heart (or so he thought) he tramped off to the smoking car.

And for some extraordinarily queer reason, the girl was sorry that she had made him angry.



## III

ROMANCE dies hard, particularly when one is some twenty-five years of age. Lucien La Cross sulked for two days, purposely missing the five-thirty-five, but in the end, goaded on by a strangely lonesome feeling, he wandered into the train and seated himself opposite the girl. He knew, from experience, that he could not trust himself to sit behind her, for the temptation of that flying pencil was so keen that it could not be thrust away. The girl, almost too absorbed in her work, was writing, but her cheeks were pinker than usual. It was she who glanced over, several times, during the trip, at Lucien. It was she who appeared half-sorry. For Lucien La Cross, quite swathed in volumes of newspaper and quarts of wounded pride, cursed out all girls, and one girl in particular. But he wondered if she were looking and—what she was writing tonight.

When he got out of the train at his station he stalked past her seat with dignity. Who could know that it required severe mental concentration to keep his eyes straight ahead?

After he left the train, the girl wrote a bit of *vers libre*. When one is troubled, *vers libre*, being rhymeless, is the easiest thing to write.

*I do not know him, (wrote the girl)  
But he has blue eyes  
And hair as black  
As midnight—  
And he walks angrily  
As a young god  
Serene in his wrath.  
And I know that he  
Hates—*

The girl stopped, for Lucien La Cross was attractive—for a commuter and she disliked the words that she knew she should write.

As for Lucien La Cross—well, that evening he called on a girl who laughed when he spoke of poetry and began every sentence with "Listen."

And, after he had gone home, at an

uninterestingly proper time, he went to bed and dreamed of—well, he dreamed!

## IV

AND so progressed the lyric love affair of Lucien La Cross. Not that Lucien knew that it was a love affair—no, indeed! He only knew that he couldn't concentrate on his work, and that his boss was beginning to criticize, and that his very young assistant was beginning to look too darn hopeful. He only knew that it was something to be desired to see Her every night, that it was a bit tragic when he didn't see her. He only knew that his calling list had diminished perceptibly, and that he couldn't have told whether the new stenographer in his office was a blond or a brunette. He only knew that he wished little hats were stylish. And he only wondered whether she wrote the poems to somebody in particular, or whether she just made 'em up out of her own head. She didn't look like a girl with a past, or an unhappy love affair, or a blighted life. And yet, sometimes, her verse hinted at just such strange things. Lucien wondered, and didn't even know that it was a bad sign.

As for the girl, well, girls are emotionally more clever than men. Particularly girls with vivid imaginations. The girl wondered whether Lucien was married, or engaged, what his name was, where he worked and what he did there, whether he ate onions, and who darned his socks. Girls are like that. But, being a girl, she knew that it was a bad sign—and she resolutely tried to put her wonderings behind her.

So it went on. Every night Lucien La Cross decided to sit in the smoking car, and every night, eventually, found him seated not too far from the girl. He noticed the way that the conductor smiled at her as he punched her ticket and envied him—he noticed her curious absorption and never guessed that it was partly ill-concealed embarrassment. He wondered feverishly, at times, whether he dared speak to her, and found himself growing cold at the



thought. Once she dropped her small handkerchief and picked it up herself hurriedly, while he scrambled in the aisle. So it went on.

And then one day Lucien La Cross, for the first time, heard her speak. It was to the conductor that she spoke.

"This," she said very pleasantly—"this is the last time that you'll punch my ticket!" Her voice was soft and low and musical.

The conductor rested a large hand on the red plush back of a seat and regarded her with sorry eyes.

"No!" he ejaculated—"You don't mean that you're not going to commute any more!"

The girl dimpled.

"I'm moving to the city," she told him, "tomorrow."

Lucien felt something unpleasant clutch at his heart. The feeling was not unlike indigestion. *She* was going—going out of his life! He might never see her again. Wild thoughts leaped into his mind—thoughts that had to do with ways and means—thoughts that were too impractical to live. He was sitting a few seats behind her on the same side of the car, and he fumed inwardly at the fate that had placed him where he could see only the back of her neck and the tip of one small ear.

The conductor passed on and the girl went back to her writing. Lucien La Cross knew that he was watching her write poetry for the last time, and he choked back something that caught at his throat.

Suddenly, blindingly, he knew that he cared—cared for a girl that he had never met—a girl whose very name was a mystery. Lucien, for the first time in his life, felt the tragedy of a crushed heart.

The train slowed down at his station. The girl was writing, her head bent low over her pad—writing very fast, as if against time. *She did not raise her head as the train stopped.* Lucien La Cross, with an all-gone feeling in the pit of his stomach, rose slowly from his seat, walked unhappily down the aisle. At the door he hesitated, turned, looked

back, but the girl was still writing. Lucien, cut to the very soul, stepped out on the station platform.

He could see her very plainly through the window. He could see the tendril of her hair that touched one pink cheek, the droop of her eyelashes, the slenderness of the white fingers that guided the flying stubby pencil. He could see her very plainly—and perhaps he would never see her again.

The train whistled. The conductor jumped for the sluggishly moving step. And all at once the girl was galvanized into action. Swiftly she flung up the car window beside her, ruthlessly she crumpled the paper she had been writing on into a ball—and then, as the astonished Lucien watched her, she smiled and threw the ball straight at him. And then the train swept past.

Lucien La Cross stood quite stupidly on the station platform. It was a full minute before he stooped to pick up the ball of crumpled yellow paper. He unfolded it almost reverently and saw, with a sudden throb of comprehension, that there was something written on it, and that the something was not poetry.

"I often," he read, "do things on impulse. If I took time to think it over, I wouldn't be writing this note. I've been sorry for ever so long about the—about my rudeness to you. I've wanted to apologize. I've felt you watching me and I've wished that there weren't conventions so that we might speak, might know each other, might—I'm moving to the city tomorrow. But, perhaps—"

And there the note stopped abruptly with a long, sputtering pencil mark.

Lucien knew that she had been forced to stop then, because the train was starting—had been forced to stop without telling him her name, and her address. If he had been a tiny boy he would have wailed out his grief, there on the station platform. But he was a man, so he squared his shoulders and thrust the crumpled paper into his most inside waistcoat pocket, and looked up the long track at the far-disappearing speck that was a train.



## V

THE next night the girl's place on the train was empty—the next night after that it was still empty, and the next, and the next. Lucien La Cross felt suddenly bereft, felt years older, felt crushed with the weight of his secret sorrow. At the end of the week he could no longer endure the loneliness. He sought the smoking car, where he puffed furiously at a degenerate pipe and thought dark thoughts.

Life looked very dismal, indeed, for Lucien La Cross told himself that he would never see her again. And then one night, in desperation, he went to call on the girl who laughed when he spoke of poetry and began every sentence with "Listen." He found her at home, reading busily. She was reading a very popular magazine with a vivid cover.

"Where've you been?" she asked Lucien as he shook her limp hand. "My, but you're the little stranger!" And then as Lucien sat down, rather wearily, across the room she laughed—

"Listen," she said, "if you're as interested as you used to be in poetry, here's one for you." And she began to read from the magazine with the vivid cover.

"The weary world," she read between giggles, "was drenched in snow—The howling wolves crept gauntly near—"

Lucien was half-way across the room. His face was alight.

"What's the name signed to that?" he questioned in a curiously grating voice.

The girl who laughed was surprised. She had never seen Lucien so interested before. She pointed with a pink forefinger to the signature.

"She writes often for this book," she told him. "I don't see how she gets away with it! Here"—she extracted a second magazine from a pile on the table beside her—"here's another of hers. Listen—" and again she read—"I do not know him—" through a mist the words came to Lucien.

*"But he has blue eyes  
And hair as black  
As midnight—"*

"It's funny stuff that, isn't it?" said the girl who laughed. "They call it free verse—"

Lucien felt himself blushing.

## VI

THE next morning at exactly nine o'clock Lucien La Cross removed the receiver nervously from his desk telephone. Who could know that he had been waiting an hour for the opening-time of a certain magazine! He gave a number stutteringly to Central, but when he spoke, after a minute, his voice was firm.

"A friend of mine," he said nonchalantly into the black mouthpiece, "writes poems for you. She moved recently and I haven't her new address. Perhaps you can tell it to me. Her name is—"

Fate turned a page in the book of Life and began on the last stanza of a poem. Fate chuckled.



ONE of the greatest pleasures in life is the feeling that we could, if we wished, break all our solemn promises.





# RUSE

By June Gibson

## I

A YOUNG fawn was seen in the copse.

Each day the faun drank of a cool spring in the wood.

A hunter dug a deep hole near the spring and covered it over with leaves and fresh moss.

## II

A gay little bird liked to splash about in the shallow pool.

He feared the large topaz cat with the green eyes and long whiskers that roamed about the garden.

The topaz cat hid among the wistaria vines till the gay little bird became daring.

## III

There was a pale-faced little woman who loved a man.

The man was sought by women more beautiful than Helen of Troy, women of greater charm than the Goddess Venus, women more fascinating than the Nile-woman Cleopatra . . .

The pale-faced little woman ignored him.



# SUMMER STORM

By Sara Teasdale

THE panther wind  
Leaps out of the night,  
The snake of lightning  
Is twisting and white,  
The lion of thunder  
Roars—and we  
Sit still and content  
Under a tree—  
We have met fate together  
And love and pain,  
Why should we fear  
The wrath of the rain!





# PILLARS OF SOCIETY

By Burton Kline

WHEN Blake and Warren moved to Boulton, their wives were not long in hearing of Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Crayne, the leaders of Boulton society. Boulton is one of the suburbs of a certain metropolis which are commonly known as the latter's Bedrooms. Dealers in autos live there, and agents for building supplies, real estate salesmen, brokers' clerks; the excellent people who earn or make all the way from five to seven thousand a year, and personify the Average American.

It is this which makes Boulton as a place of residence so very inconvenient for people of consequence who must worry along in respectable poverty on a mere four thousand annually.

We are never envious of the very rich. It is only when Brown, next door, achieves a sudden increase of a thousand or so to his yearly income, that we take notice. Our wives are especially quick in making the discovery.

Blake was a fated subject of this indignity. Though he sported a paragraph in that obscure volume, "Who's Who," and some reputation as a paragrapher almost as funny on his own account, he was after all only a newspaper person, and not in the pages of Dun. The Warrens, on the other hand, had come to Boulton with the indispensable distinction of a seven-passenger car; whilst the Blakes had inherited nothing more substantial than a collection of antique furniture and a houseful of pictures and books.

In spite of this damning disparity, the Blakes were quite frequently passengers in the Warren car: the Warrens were as often guests of the Blakes at modest Sunday night suppers. Most

people were willing to take a chance on the acquaintance of Blake. There never was telling when he might break into the *Saturday Evening Post*, or come out with a Broadway success. It must have been this which enabled their wives to be fast friends in spite of such a chasm between their family resources.

In no time at all, even without benefit of immediate acquaintance in Boulton, the wives of these men had learned the facts about Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Crayne.

"Oh, dear," Mrs. Blake sighed to her husband one evening at dinner; "why did you never take up autos, darling! I saw Mrs. Morley today. They say her husband makes \$30,000 a year. And she certainly looks it. Such diamonds I never saw! Why, Eldon, dear, one of them, a brooch, must have cost her two or three thousand alone. And her sable coat—m-m! It wouldn't hurt her to reduce, but she looks awfully sweet. I wonder"—another sigh—"if we'll ever get to know them."

Blake had his own ways of uttering damns, so he said:

"Well! Mrs. Morley does appear to be a sweet, jelly-like substance."

"She has \$30,000 a year!" his wife silenced him.

At times after that Blake came to hear further of Mrs. Morley and her pleasant fortunes, her sable coat and her even more wonderful sable hair; so that in irony, or perhaps in self-defence, he fell to calling her Mrs. Morley-or-Leslie.

"But, my dear!" he defended himself against his wife's instant rebuke of this on the score of sour grapes, "Mor-



ley' alone seems hardly enough for all of her."

"Oh, well. Make me \$30,000 a year, and you may call people what you like."

"And may I call Boulton 'Nouveau Richelle'?"

In the Blake economy, as in so many other households, yearly income was a staple topic for debate.

Mrs. Crayne was almost equally salient on the streets of Boulton, at Boulton teas, even at the motion-picture performances, when the act was staged in the cause of charity. It is true she drove only a chummy roadster, and her gowns were not nearly so costly as those of her more fortunate sister, for her husband dealt only in supplies. This cruel deficiency, however, she more than made up with her superior taste in the wearing of her diamonds. Lesser women loved her for her rigorous restrictions in the number she wore at a time. In addition her blonde hair was often preferred to the raven locks of her relative and rival.

## II

AFTER six months in Boulton a strange and fatal thing befell the Blakes. They met the Craynes and the Morleys. And as it always does, the phenomenal came about in the most casual and humdrum manner.

It so happened that in the house adjoining the Blakes dwelt Mrs. Dracut and her husband, a new and aspiring official in a metropolitan expressage concern. As a newcomer, Dracut was naturally anxious for business. To this praiseworthy ambition the Morley and Crayne interests opposed a desire for speedy deliveries. And so these converging interests one evening found themselves conjoined at an auction party organized by Mrs. Dracut, for purely charitable purposes. Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Crayne, at the instance of their husbands, gratefully accepted their invitations.

"For business reasons, my dear," each husband had urged.

Charity no less than politics assembles

strange bed-fellows, and at the last moment the Blakes and the Warrens were needed to fill out unexpected gaps at the tables.

Warren, as a professional gentleman, naturally held himself aloof all evening. Never happy in light conversation, he took refuge in his social position as a real estate broker and remained non-committal. Blake, a born mixer, was soon on good terms with the breezy and bibulous Morley, and equally well with the bibulous and breezy Crayne. He laughed at their stories, lost to their superior skill, and sat with patience through their lengthy asides with the host on the subject of speedy deliveries. In a word, Blake made a favorable impression; but most of all upon his wife.

She beamed at him twice, awed as she was by the wives of the personages. Nevertheless it was a fact that here they were, all in the same room, in society. The two social leaders exhibited their affection for their husbands as well as their diamonds, though it must be said that at more than one moment during the evening Mrs. Crayne turned upon Blake a glance that made him turn the color of his own "Who's Who." But of this he prudently said nothing to his wife. Mrs. Morley, in especial, was given to charming excesses of romanticism, so that she patted her husband's hand, when they met, even as opponents, at the same table. "Beely" was her softened form for the plain Bill Morley of his masculine friends.

It was, "Beely, deah, look out for that draft." Or, "Now, Beely, precious, not too much." And the most affecting glances passed between them.

Immediately the good ladies who met her that evening were copying her accent and rehearsing it on their husbands at home.

As a result of this refreshing new interest ushered into her life, Mrs. Blake was well on the way to a new friendship with Mrs. Dracut, but for a mishap foolishly slight. A week or two later the Craynes, no less, having found Blake an agreeable noodle, asked the



Blakes to a poker party. Even in this there was nothing amiss except their unfortunate oversight of the Dracuts. A temporary preference, no doubt, for Blake's stories over the speedy deliveries, had dictated the choice.

Greatly to the scandal of his wife, Blake hugely enjoyed this fruitful situation. Personally acquainted, like all good journalists, with every variety of human figure, he regaled the company with the happiest shafts at the great, laughed heartily at the chestnuts of his hosts, praised his taste in Scotch, and lost all he dared in play. From that moment the Blakes were on their own account a fixture in Boulton society.

Nevertheless, as Mrs. Blake had skillfully foreseen, a prompt coolness sprang up between herself and Mrs. Dracut.

The pace of their new life, it is true, cost the Blakes many a secret sacrifice in the home; but these they bore cheerfully, as Mrs. Blake argued, "considering the gain." Almost without ceasing the happy couple assembled with their new friends in parties at cards or for dancing.

So things moved.

If only, as many of us may have noticed, things would move always smoothly!

One bright day, long before the arrival of the robins, when only the new modes were present to herald the approach of Spring, Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Crayne, wearing their new confections, happened by the purest chance to be passing the home of Mrs. Warren, and thoughtfully dropped in for a call.

"Do you like it, deah?" purred Mrs. Crayne, revolving before Mrs. Warren.

"Do you *really* like it, my deah?" purred Mrs. Morley, in a similar revolution.

"You put me terribly in the shade!" Mrs. Warren conceded—while silently calculating the exact moment when she might turn the shadow straight back upon its source.

"In the shade?" pipes Mrs. Crayne.

"What a joke! You always look sweet, Martha, deah."

"It wouldn't be so much of a joke for poor Isabel Blake!" giggles Mrs. Morley. "Really, I pity that girl. I don't believe her husband makes \$5,000 a year."

"Pity her!" sniffs Mrs. Crayne. "Look at the airs she gives herself—because her husband is 'literary'!"

"Oh-h, yes!" Mrs. Morley abets; "being a newspaper person is so—o 'literary'!"

"And the things she says! As if she knew it all. I think it's simply dreadful, the remarks she passes on you, Martha Warren."

"Why!" Mrs. Morley took up the cudgels. "I always thought she was a *friend* of yours."

"Deliver me," said Mrs. Crayne, "from such a friend!"

"Why, only the other day she said—"

"She said—"

Here the two callers found themselves talking at once, so that Mrs. Crayne, the younger, was obliged to defer.

"Do tell it, Fanny."

"She said that Blake said—you know, he thinks he's so funny—that Blake said your poor boob of a husband, if he hadn't had a rich father, wouldn't be able to keep Jerusalem in pork. Wasn't it that, Ethel, deah?"

"Not merely that, Martha!" Mrs. Crayne rolled her eyes. "I daren't *tell* you the things she said."

They were an hour or more in completing the catalogue of Mrs. Blake's remarks.

"The little cat!" Mrs. Warren was obliged to agree, at the end of it.

### III

THE next day, happening by the purest chance to be passing the home of Mrs. Blake, again in their new confections, the two excellent ladies dropped in for a cocktail and a call.

"Do you like it?" purred Mrs. Crayne, revolving before the speechless Mrs. Blake.



"Do you *really* like it, my deah?" purred Mrs. Morley, during a similar revolution.

"You put me all in the shade!" Mrs. Blake confessed, truthfully and ruefully enough.

"Oh, but you, with your exquisite taste, Isabel, deah, you always look so sweet!" Mrs. Crayne smiled back.

"Oh, let me tell you!" Mrs. Morley clapped her hands. "Ethel and I happened to pass Martha Warren by the purest chance on the street the other day, and you should have seen her green eyes when she looked us over. The jealous cat! I'll bet she makes her husband's life sweet till he buys her something to beat us!"

"Yes, and we stopped to talk," says Mrs. Crayne. "And Isabel! I never really saw into that person before. Wasn't it awful, Fanny, the things she said?"

"Was it! Why, she said—"

"She said—"

"You tell it, Fanny."

"She said she absolutely pitied you—her very words. You, married to a poor stick and pauper like Eldon Blake.

"And that isn't all. You should have heard her go on about the airs you give yourself—just because you're married to a—"

"To a 'literary' person! Her very words. You should have heard the way she said it too. 'Literary' person. And right on the street. A dozen people passed us and must have heard it."

"Yes, and a 'literary' person, just because he works on a newspaper!"

"Oh, you may have *that* girl for a friend, if you want her!"

"I can't believe it!" says the astonished Mrs. Blake, at the end of it all.

That evening the telephone rang in the residence of the Blakes. The ring was for Isabel, from Martha.

"Isabel," sobs Mrs. Warren, "what can you *mean* by saying the things you do about me, and about my husband! He can buy yours out any day, and you know it!" . . .

The end of the hour and the end of

a friendship came to a common end at the second when Mrs. Blake, in tears, hung up the receiver.

#### IV

At dances after that, Mrs. Blake and Mrs. Warren, and of course their husbands, waltzed past each other in total ignorance of each other's existence. And in not much longer the Warrens and the Dracuts, for some mysterious reasons, pursued the same course toward each other.

As for the Morleys and the Craynes, the steadily increasing revenues of their husbands soon hoisted them into courses too giddy for even the Warrens to follow. They headed every charity subscription with a smashing sum.

"It's good advertising," their husbands counselled.

No meeting of the Women's Club was complete without them. The Women's Auxiliary to the Hospital was powerless without their aid. They set up the fashionable church with a professional choir. And so also they did not neglect to enjoy life. They motored to the boat races at New London. They toured to Newport. They soared.

If one may be said to soar while keeping the feet firmly on earth.

The two ladies continued to favor Boulton drawing-rooms, perhaps more assiduously than before. At intervals they even entertained, with tactful separateness, the Blakes, the Warrens, the Dracuts. Indeed, the wives of those good fellows were, one after the other, included in motor parties, always to some swagger tea-house or inn, with all expenses paid in the most lavish manner. As the Messrs. Morley and Crane became more and more absorbed in fruitful enterprise, these excursions on the part of their wives became increasingly frequent.

And then became clear the purpose of their faithful patronage of Boulton and Boulton ladies. It came to be noticeable to Mrs. Blake, to Mrs. Warren, to Mrs. Dracut, that on each occasion of a motor tour with Mrs. Morley



or Mrs. Crayne, agreeable gentlemen were also present—business associates of their husbands, they were always introduced. By a gradual numerical process the number of these male guests dwindled, from three to two, from two to one; and finally the one gentleman guests became always the same gentleman.

Boulton and the Mesdames Blake, Warren, and Dracut, were handy as—as stabilizers; as—as chaperones; as—as a cloak!

This striking fact that Mrs. Blake and Mrs. Dracut bechanced to observe co-evally one day as they were about to pass without notice of each other on the fashionable street. Almost at the same moment they noticed instead the snappy roadster of Mrs. Crayne about to pass them. It contained Mrs. Crayne and the gentleman friend. The car appeared to be in haste to pass and be on.

In spite of herself, Mrs. Dracut said, to no one in particular:

"Well!"

To no one in particular Mrs. Blake answered:

"Well!"

Gathering courage, she said further:

"Did you only see the nerve of that!"

"My dear! Is *this* the first you've noticed it!"

And so the very element which had estranged the two ladies now served as the means of their reconciliation. Seeing Mrs. Blake and Mrs. Dracut reunited on the street, Mrs. Warren one day took courage to nod to them. The nod being graciously returned, she even stopped to remark:

"Well! Have you heard all about it? They've separated! Both couples, precious pairs that they are!"

## V

OTHER excellent women in Boulton, who had come to look askance at the Mesdames Blake, Warren, and Dracut,

for their association with the Mesdames Morley and Crayne, now cultivated their company, and were not long in coming to the point:

"Now tell us all about them!"

What people need, especially the people of the Boultons, is an interest in life, no matter how or by whom it is furnished.

In the end it was a singularly slack lady of Boulton who missed a single detail in the process which finally led to the disappearance, the extinction, let us say, of the ladies Morley and Crayne from Boulton. But they left behind endless report of themselves. And once or twice after that they had the effrontery to sail through town in their cars.

Of course there was endless speculation as to their future. And by common consent it was dark.

"Well!" said the sage Mrs. Dracut, over Mrs. Blake's tea-cups one afternoon. "I always *knew* there was something queer about that sporty pair."

"Oh," says Mrs. Warren, waxing sentimental; "I think they'll come together some day. Their husbands are easy. Don't you think so, Isabel?"

"Never!"

"That kind always does those foolish things. Off again, on again, Fin-negin."

"But, Martha, I *know*! Eldon has a lawyer friend, and he *knows*."

"Then they've applied for divorce?" says Mrs. Dracut.

"No. And they never will."

"Never *will*? Why not?"

Mrs. Blake giggles and says:

"Ask Eldon! Here he comes."

As Blake blew in he faced a chorus of inquiry.

"Why aren't they trying for divorces? Tell them Eldon," his wife giggles on.

"Because, my dear ladies, you can't get a divorce when you've never been married."





# THAT REMINDS ME

By Elliott McEldowney

THE laughter about the table from the last "that reminds me" grew moribund. The benignant old party next the young man with the shell spectacles rattled his glass.

"That reminds me . . ." he gurgled.

The young man picked up the silver knife with the engraved V on the handle. Quietly he leaned over and neatly severed the jugular vein of the benignant old party. Then he settled comfortably in his chair. He had ended for the evening all "that reminds me's."

There was quiet about the table for a moment. The butler carried out the remains of the old gentleman with the remains of the salad course. The young man wiped his knife. He was pleased. He liked quail.

A middle-aged diner jerked his thumb in the direction the corpse had taken "That reminds me . . ." he began.



# LE CYNGE

By George O'Neil

THROWN by poplars tapering tall,  
Quivering silver shadows fall  
Streaming the light in strange festoon  
Over the lacquer-smooth lagoon.

Leaning a cypress looms, and dark,  
Shelters the balustraded park,  
Drooping its lace to the marble seat  
Where the whispering lovers meet.

Tremulous winds are slightly stirred;  
Faintly the song of a waking bird  
Flutters the listless leaves about,  
Spilling its gold . . . and dying out . . .

Into the disc of the mirrored moon,  
Phantom white on the dark lagoon,  
Drifting slowly . . . drifting on . . .  
Stately, smooth and still—the swan. . .



# THE MAN WITH ONE WIFE

By Ben Hecht

## I

THERE are moments in every man's life when the consciousness of sin penetrates his sophistication and causes him to suffer. Hardened though he be, cynical of the moral standards of his fellow-men, into the innermost solitude of his being the nausea of guilt yet manages to creep. And then, for the moment, he stands face to face with himself and knows himself as the gods he has denied and forsworn know him.

Thus Ezra Gimmil sat in the thirty-seventh year of his life staring out of the window of his home at the mountain which, like an eternal guardian, shut out the world from Provo, the city of his birth. He was a tall, gaunt man; a headstrong, cynically abandoned man. And yet, as he sat before the window gazing out upon the serene mountain, upon the lazy streets that stretched themselves under the afternoon sun, upon the low roofs and the quiet order of Provo, the torment which seeks men out who crudely fancy they have hidden themselves from God, came into his heart.

He thought, as he sat motionless as some awkwardly carven image, of his father and his father's father, and of his mothers, plump and gentle women. They had all been pious, law-abiding. The name Gimmil had always been one of the prides of Provo. And now, here was he, Ezra Gimmil, a pariah among the righteous, an affliction in the thought of the godly.

In the midst of his thinking the door opened and a woman of twenty-five entered. Her hair was black and her

face full. Her figure was strong and undulant. She stood regarding him for a space and then with a deep, curious laugh, moved toward him.

"Why so sad, Ezra?" she asked.

The sound of her voice fell across his emotion like a whip. He brought himself slowly to his feet. Here was the cause of his disgrace, here the reason for the disfavor which had overtaken the name of Gimmil. She it was who had caused him to deny the teachings of God, to fly in the face of his townspeople. Were it not for her and the insidious spell she exercised over him he would have married Martha Dale and Eva Dale. Yes, he could have taken to himself Martha and Eva and Ruth and Mary, all of them beautiful and pious women who would have helped him to live properly in the eyes of God and of his fellow-men, who would have reflected righteousness and glory upon his name, and by whom he would have had children, twenty, thirty children, as the Prophet of the Mormons had bade to be.

She it was, standing now before him, who had placed her plump arms about his neck and in exchange for a sterile kiss caused him to sell his soul to the Devil. A hardened, malignant, headstrong sinner, Ezra Gimmil, yet as he stared at her he hated her and hated himself. He saw himself as the contemptible renegade whose name was fast becoming a byword in Utah.

"Get away!" he cried out to her. "Get away and leave me be!"

The woman who was his wife only smiled at him. She knew these periodic tempers of his. Slowly she continued to approach him. How much



longer she would be able to hold him in the coils of her passion she could not tell. But, womanlike, she managed to smile most when thinking most bitterly. With tender, cautious strength she pulled him back into the chair.

"What is it, husband?" she asked softly. "Do you no longer love me? Do I no longer make recompense for the frowns of your neighbors?"

Her arms once more encircled him and upon his lips she fastened hers. Closing his eyes and his senses to the power of the woman, Ezra murmured, as in desperation,

"My father was a good man in the eyes of his God and his people. He had twelve wives. His father, who was among the first to come to Provo, had fourteen wives. And I, who bear their name, live in sin with one wife, live in defiance of all that is holy and pure."

Slowly, with eyes flashing, Ezra's wife removed her lips from his. She, too, was a Mormon and, like her husband, given to sudden outbreaks of conscience. Well she knew the emotions which the elders of the church entertained toward her husband, the manner in which the Apostles raised their eyes in scorn and prayer when he passed. Was it worth while, after all, this life of defiance? Would not, as the Elders preached, retribution, terrible and complete, overtake both of them?

Miama Gimmil sighed and straightened her body. As long as her husband spoke not of this thing, no thought of it came to disturb her. But seeing him lost in the torments which God sends to sinners, Miama too felt the still, small voice of conscience speaking faintly and divinely in her soul of souls. Silently she fell to her knees before her husband.

"Go," she whispered brokenly. "It is your . . . your duty."

Her head fell into the lap of Ezra Gimmil and she wept.

And here, in order to understand and appreciate the sinister convolutions of Ezra Gimmil's thought, one must

understand and appreciate the first great principle of all great egoists and sinners—no man to himself can long remain vile. Thus, although he had opened his heart for the moment to the consciousness of sin, Ezra Gimmil was not stirred out of the ways of evil by the shock. He had during this moment of spiritual illumination seen to the bottom of his being. With tortured senses he had observed his transgressions as if with the eyes of God Himself. But of so coarse a fiber is the soul of man, of so virile a substance the natural evil once it comes uppermost, that it can with the agility of a duck's back shed the holiest of waters and the purest of thoughts.

Conscious of his returning weakness, aware of his renunciation of God and purity, Ezra Gimmil slowly gave himself over to the unhallowed tumult beginning to stir in his bosom. He felt, as he had on the day of his wedding in the Temple of Provo, the insidious lure of Miama. For a moment there circled in the back of his thought the vision of the Elder Dale and his thirty-seven daughters. But he put this last effort of his fading virtue from him. An expression of unholy rapture lighted his narrow, evil eyes. His lips parted in a wild laugh. Truly as he stood inanimate for an instant facing his one wife, he was Ezra Gimmil as the elect of Provo deemed him, a man possessed by the Evil One, immune to the gospels, oblivious to the laws of decency and righteousness.

"Miama," he cried aloud, "come, I have love for you. And only you. What does it matter, the obloquy of the world? I shall brook no other to trespass upon our home. Let them cast me out. We shall go forth together, sinners in truth, but with the light of freedom in our hearts. What are the laws of God and of man compared to the laws of the heart? Miama, my own, tell me you do not wish for any wifely companions?"

A curious, abandoned note came into his voice, a wilder gleam into his eye. He raised his gaunt arm and shook it at



the mountain that guarded the city of his birth, at the Temple wherein his fathers had worshipped.

"Miama," he cried, "we will live as one, you and I. And there shall be no other."

For a space Miama Gimmil shuddered before the violent sacrilege of her husband. Into her heart crept a dread. What manner of demon was this, her Ezra, to defy God and his people? What ominous retribution would overtake him? And her? Dared she continue?

Then, suddenly, all that was female in her made answer. With a joyous cry she hurled herself into her husband's arms.

And it was at this significant instant that the Elder Brigham Dale passed the front windows of the home of Ezra Gimmil. The Elder Dale was a man advanced in years, white-bearded and with the stateliness which long virtue and long worship of the true God alone can give a man. He was short and heavy through the chest and stomach. But his legs were still firm and his eyes clear and vigorous.

And thus, passing the windows of Ezra Gimmil's home at this particular instant, he was able to see that which sent a shock into the depths of his being. There before him, shamelessly embraced in each other's arms, standing in the same light which shone upon the Temple, were the wanton Miama and the apostate Ezra.

Thirty-seven daughters had the Elder Dale, each of them a plump and gentle maiden. And nine wives had the Elder Dale, each of them a pious and wondrous helpmeet. The youngest of his daughters was six and the oldest of them thirty and two of them were betrothed and two of them were married and thirty-three of them awaited to be taken by good Mormons.

Raising his eyes the Elder murmured a prayer, which in his anger and horror he was unable to complete. He had known the father of Ezra Gimmil. He had known the wives of his father. All of them pious, scrupulous Mormons.

And he, himself, had reared thirty-seven daughters. Ingrate, renegade, servant of Satan! The Elder Dale shook his fist at the two embraced figures. Then, overpowered by his emotions, he dashed up the steps of Ezra Gimmil's home and burst into the room wherein the couple still stood. His first words separated the twain like some blow delivered from on high.

"Monogamist!" he shouted in his deep voice. "For this have we and your fathers led you into the true ways of God! For this! To be betrayed by you! To watch you flaunt your evil in our faces! To abide with you whilst you disown the fruits of our work! Where are your wives? Where are your pledges to the Apostles? Answer me, monogamist!"

Miama, at the sound of the booming voice of the elder, slipped coweringly toward the opposite wall. In her face shame burned and her eyes were filled with terror. In this moment the teachings of her childhood, the holy things learned at her mother's knee, rushed to the surface, and raising her eyes she waited for God to strike.

Then, as the Elder continued to speak, she stole a glance at her husband. Ezra was standing with his head thrown back, his lips thrust forth in a snarl. She watched the Elder approach him slowly. She heard the Elder talking now in a calmer voice, an appealing voice.

"Ezra Gimmil, the Apostles of the Temple have appointed me to speak with you. Are you of a mood to listen?"

Indeed, for one so outraged and violent but a moment before, a curious change had come over the Elder. It had, moreover, its effect upon the apostate.

Shaking his head slowly, Ezra Gimmil answered,

"What speech can there be between us, Elder? You see me as I am, as I wish to be. What more can I say?"

There was a note of sorrow in the voice of Ezra Gimmil, which the Elder was quick to hear.



"Come with me to the Temple," the Elder went on more calmly than before. "And we shall see what is to be seen. Better than that, come with me to my home. Provo has not abandoned you, my son, though you have abandoned it in your soul. Provo still remembers your father and his father. None fought so valiantly for the Saints, none worked so faithfully as they. Your sisters themselves will speak for that. Come with me to my home, Ezra, my son, and I will show you to my daughters. I am not one to condemn in sudden anger the waywardness of youth."

A cloud came upon Ezra Gimmil's features. He continued to shake his head.

"No," he answered, "it cannot be. It will not avail for me to look upon your daughters."

## II

THE home of Elder Brigham Dale was divided into nine houses. Therein, in peace and humanly orchestrated harmony, lived his extensive issue. In the heart of the town of Provo were two stores which the Elder owned. He was, because of his good works and his reputed wealth, a man of power in the place and for six years he had held a council seat. His thirty-seven daughters were indeed as so many fair monuments to his piety.

But together with the blessings which had been given him had been meted out his proper allotment of hardships. And, as may be easily inferred, the problems of thirty-seven daughters, with thirty-three of them yet to be given in wedlock, were not among the least of his declining years. Thus it was that his thoughts had of late centered about Ezra Gimmil. Could this strange renegade be won back into the faith of his fathers, a faith which he had not publicly renounced, he could be induced to take from the Dale home at least ten daughters.

The Elder Gimmil had surrounded himself with twelve wives. That his son

should find content with one in the face of the revelation of God and the laws of holy church was something which the Elder Dale, with all his deep learning, could not understand. Rightfully he laid it to the ramified evil which had taken root in the soul and body of Ezra Gimmil.

After his futile visit in the Gimmil home the Elder, inspired by a lifelong virtue as well as an economic necessity—for his wealth under the strain of thirty-seven daughters was not now what it had once been—called a meeting of the Apostles in the Temple. Before the men who assembled, all venerable, all wise, and all virtuous Mormons, the Elder Dale set forth the dangers which such a man as Ezra Gimmil introduced into the life of Provo. This was before the days when the tenets of faith began to weaken, when the youths of Provo, thirsting for adventure, began to slip quietly from the town, when the satraps of the government at Washington began to pry into the divinities of the great Creed.

But in laying before the assemblage in the Temple the facts and inferences and dangers, the Elder Dale urged above all things caution. He had carefully meditated upon the matter. To drive Ezra Gimmil from his home and from the soil which his fathers had tilled and built upon would be a simple business. But in driving him forth would he not drive forth also the potential husband of his ten daughters? Few young men there were in Provo as wealthy at their age as was Ezra Gimmil. His inheritance had been large. And he had had no brothers. Therefore, caution, caution, urged the Elder Dale. Prayers and mediation, faith and cajolery. Let them summon before them the woman Miama first and talk with her. Let them do all that could be done before taking violent measures to rid the town of its devil's adherent.

Thus it came about that during the month which followed this assemblage the name of Ezra Gimmil was to be heard continually in the prayer of the



righteous of Provo. Courtesy and kindness were shown to him everywhere. The elders themselves bought heavily of his grain, which filled to bursting the three great barns behind his home. And yet these manoeuvres fell insensibly upon the apostate. Since the day he had opened his heart to the torments of a consciousness of sin Ezra Gimmil had closely watched himself. There was in him the stubbornness which is to be noted in the characters of great sinners as well as in those of great saints, both of whom are identically the stuff of martyrdom.

At night he lay often awake, scowling into the darkness. He had no precepts of God or man to excuse his weakness. And yet there was something within him greater than all the human and divine dictates he had been taught by his fathers to reverence. It was the voice of his flesh crying out against the voices of godliness and virtue. And this voice alone he would follow, let it lead him into the seventh perdition. He was a man and able to march upon Hell like a man—if Miama would remain only at his side. Let the Devil claim them both. . . .

It was after the services in the Temple one March evening that the Elder Dale finally spoke the word of doom. He had waited long. He had done all that could be done. He had fought to the last moment. He leaped now into the pulpit and raising his arm above the heads of the congregation, burst forth in a booming voice,

"Brethren of God, children of the Latter Day Saints, hearken! I am to speak to you of that which all of you know. There is in our midst one who has forsworn the God of his fathers, one who has turned upon the laws of the land into which he was born. His name is Ezra Gimmil, son of Rufus Gimmil. We of the Temple have spoken with him and prayed for him. But the light of God will not enter a soul overshadowed by the breath of evil. For five years has Ezra Gimmil continued to live in flagrant monogamy with a wanton named Miama. For five

years has this woman, with her eyes and her kisses, her words and her body, lured this man to continue to live in sin with her alone, to deny to the sisters of his church the sanctity of his home. Inhospitable and abandoned, I denounce him as a menace to the morals of our Provo and a danger to the youth of our church. Such an example of depravity is bound if countenanced to have an effect upon the immature among us. All kindness has failed. There remains but one thing, brethren. . . ."

Through the gloomy streets of Provo, overshadowed by the guardian mountain which shut it off from the world, moved a silent procession. Fifty men there were in the procession, recruited from the most respectable and pious of the Temple's congregation. They moved through the dark streets without murmur. In their midst five of them carried a long rough timber.

Ezra Gimmil, raising his eyes from a book he was reading, stared out of the window into the darkness. He had caught the sound of the tread of many feet. Instinct, which is the companion of evil no less than of virtue, had shot a message into his brain.

He darted to the window and peered out.

Silence and the night—but beyond, the slowly moving shadows of many figures.

They were coming after him.

Without a murmur Ezra Gimmil sped swiftly to the second floor of his home. In her bed, weary with the duties of her home, lay his wife Miama. He shook her and awakened her.

"Our time is come," he whispered fiercely. "For our sins we are to be ridden out of Provo upon a rail at the hands of the Elders. Do you come with me?"

A terrified light shone from Miama's eyes. She rose and dressed. Noiselessly the two rushed down the stairs, slipped out of the back door and scurried in the darkneses toward the mountain. Beyond the mountain ran the stage coach. Ezra Gimmil had filled



his pockets with coins. All else, his home, his animals and his land, he had left behind him.

And the fifty Elders of the Temple bearing the long, rough timber found the home empty and cried out in wrath, sending their curses after the sinners, who had fled.

### III

IN the city of Chicago, whither Ezra Gimmil and his wife Miamia finally took their way, there was little to recall to their thought the harrowing experiences of their life in Provo. Here, Ezra Gimmil, with the same grimness which had characterized his defiance of his people, plunged himself into the activity about him. Within two months he had obtained a foremanship in a grain elevator on the river. He worked from seven in the morning until five in the afternoon and each day he returned to the home which his wife Miamia kept for him, five little rooms in a huge building full of strange and heathen people.

But content did not come to him. Even as he had sat tormented one afternoon in the home of his fathers in Provo, did he sit now night after night, nursing the true torments of one who

has been separated from land and people and God.

And each night Miamia, sensing more and more the griefs which were consuming their happiness and sharing them, spoke hopefully to her husband.

"It is not too late, Ezra. Here, even in the land of the heathen, we may retrieve the favor of God. You can repent. See, I wish it, my husband. Come, let us look about us and find for our home at least two other wives. And I will write to the elders of Provo what you have done and they will forgive."

But Ezra Gimmil, looking into the eyes of the woman for whom he had lost his earthly wealth and his divine soul, only shook his head.

"I cannot," he said. "There is something within me which forbids. I was born dedicated to the devil. I cannot fly against my destiny. In sin we have lived. In sin we must die. There is no retracing our ways. . . ."

And because he was at heart a pious and reverent man, there was for Ezra Gimmil no consolation in the fact that the heathen among whom he worked and lived deemed him a worthy and righteous man. Nay, there was sin in his soul and he knew it. And so he lived and died—and went to hell.



## IN SILENCE

By Charles Wharton Stork

A WHILE we spoke of this and that,  
Of love among the rest,  
With here a hint of selfish pride  
And there an empty jest.

Then suddenly we faltered,  
I could not speak your name.  
We felt the wind of wings that beat  
In silence when love came.



# THE MIRACLE

By Charles Hanson Towne

WE were talking of coincidences; of how strange it is that this and that person meet in a crowded city, on a steamer, in a distant land—anywhere. But how seldom we consider how miraculous it is when two people, apparently everything to each other, and only a stone's throw apart, fail to realize their propinquity.

And then Christopher told us this little tale.

\* \* \*

Constance and Philip Marsden know the Bertie Dunlaps well. Lily Dunlap is one of the loveliest women in a world filled with lovely women. Her hair, a golden riot on her head, is the despair and envy of her women friends; and her eyes, deep velvet pools in the hush of starlight, are at once heaven and hell. In them are stored the dreams of the ages; and here indeed is a replica of that "face that launched a thousand ships."

How Bertie succeeded in marrying her is one of the mysteries; for he was the last man in the world to appeal to a woman like Lily—so we all said. The Marsdens could never solve the thing; nor could anyone else, for that matter. For Bertie, despite his virility, his manliness, was the most prosaic of men, utterly lacking in imagination—a commonplace enough type of young American engineer, good looking in a certain crude way, a man to mix a perfect cocktail and appear fine in his evening clothes, but beyond that—well, you know the kind. You see him every day on the Avenue, as if he had been made in a mould.

Yet six years before he had wooed and won this beautiful woman, and

they seemed to live in the shadow of serenity, if not in the blazing sun of love-madness. Two children came to them, and Lily, for all her vivid beauty, seemed to "settle down," after a fashion. She was content to be with Bertie and the children—if anyone had called them "the kiddies" she would have slapped his face, for she was anything but a bromide. She never complained, either. She was not that type.

Constance kept up the friendship, for she and Lily had gone to school together, and that seems to make a bond between two women second only to the college ties of men. But Constance often told Phil that she could see that Lily was more in love with her husband than he was with her, and she couldn't help wondering.

"Why, she adores him! Yet he's late for dinner again and again; and she's the one who does the ringing up. I've heard her go to the telephone twice in the same afternoon when I've been at her home. Isn't it strange?"

But Philip, because he was a man—and a good deal like Bertie—simply yawned, admitted that it was, gave a last puff on his cigar, and went lazily upstairs to bed.

One or two old flames kept on coming to Lily's house—the fox-trotting kind of cavalier who like to be seen with a beautiful woman, particularly when it breaks into their afternoons and interferes with their "business." But Lily was unkind to them, just as she was unkind to hostesses, who, when they asked her to their homes for tea, were put off with her famous *mot*:

"No, I never go to tea, because one



always meets at tea the kind of people who go to tea."

When Constance heard this remark, she knew that Lily could not be suffering. When one retains a sense of humor, after a stupid marriage, one is not to be pitied. Yet, after all, was it a stupid marriage?

Then the war came, and, in the first days of the draft, much to everyone's surprise, Bertie Dunlap enlisted at once. And not in any swivel-chair regiment. Not he! He went down to a camp near New York, and the talk was that, a lieutenant now, he would soon get a captain's commission.

"Who would have thought he had it in him?" people said. "To go right in with the riff-raff, when he might have had a comfortable berth in Washington!"

And Lily became a romantic semi-widow.

The Marsdens rang her up more than ever, and got her for dinner whenever they could. They called it "doing their bit." But Lily wasn't always available. She seemed bowed down beneath her sudden burden of loneliness; and more and more she withdrew from her friends and acquaintances. Her lovely face took on an aspect of grief.

It was four months after Bertie went away that Constance and Philip, late one afternoon, met Lily on the crowded Avenue, looking forlorn and tragically sad.

"Come with us," Constance said. "You are eating your heart out with loneliness. We are going to dine at the Ritz tonight and go to a play—we can get another seat for you next us—and we'll have a ripping time."

And Lily—she never knew why, save that she was bored to tears—accepted their glowing invitation.

"Bertie is seldom able to get to town on leave—he's so busy. I've seen him only twice since he went away. He says he's about worked to death," she told her friends, as they moved up the street together.

Later, under the soft light of the lamp on the hotel table, she spoke of

her loneliness. Oh, but she was terribly in love! Her reserve melted, and in little gasps she spoke of sleepless nights and sad and seemingly endless days in the little house just off Gramercy Park. There were tears in her eyes and voice, and her lips trembled as the words came haltingly through them.

"You need your friends at such a time," Constance told her. "We must do *matinées* together, and go to concerts. I had no idea they worked the men so hard at the camps—did you, Phil?"

They took a taxi. It was a light, sparkling comedy they were going to see—the talk of the town, in one of the fashionable theatres just off Broadway in the Forties; just the kind of play for tired nerves, Constance said, as they rushed through the crowded streets.

At the very door of the playhouse, Lily grasped her friend's hand.

"I can't go in," she said. "Forgive me—but I can't go in. The children will need me tonight. Little Bertie isn't strong, you know. I couldn't stay away from him this whole evening. I really couldn't. I don't know why I said I would come. It's selfish. . . . No, I can't go in!"

No protestations could drag her from the cab. She was not hysterical; she showed, on the contrary, more poise than she had revealed for months. But she was firmer than Constance and Philip had ever seen her before. She asked their forgiveness—but she had to go on home. Wouldn't they be kind, and understand? Wouldn't they be doubly gracious now, after all their graciousness, which she deserved so little, and send her on her way? She would see them soon—she would give a little dinner in their honor; she would send flowers to Constance on the morrow; she would. . . .

And she had her way. A line of taxis came up behind them. The Marsdens could not persuade her; and they loved her for her motherly solicitude, though secretly they deplored her futile going home. The children would be in bed,



and Lily's presence at their side would be utterly useless.

The door of the taxi slammed, and Lily waved good-bye to her friends from the window, a smile upon her lips. She had never looked lovelier.

And Constance and Philip went into the theatre. Just as the footlights went up, a tall soldier came down the aisle with a woman, and sat almost directly in front of them.

Of course it was Bertie, with two silver bars on his shoulder. And his companion—it was obvious what, if not who, she was.

Yes, it was Bertie indeed. And though the play was a comedy, it might as well have been a tragedy, so far as the two friends of Lily were concerned. They never remembered what it was about. In fact, they went home before the second act.

There was a pause.

"That is not all," Christopher said. "I wish it were."

"And the miracle?" someone asked.

"The miracle is that Lily, with all her feminine sensitiveness, did not feel the approach of Bertie, as she sat in the taxi before the theatre. Perhaps you may think she did—that she saw him coming up the street with his companion—and that is why she went on home. But she did not."

"How do you know?" I could not help asking.

"Because the next morning," said Christopher, growing very grave, "the papers told how a taxicab, at the corner of Fifty-second street and Broadway, had run into a heavy touring-car, and been demolished. The driver was only slightly hurt; but the man and woman inside had been killed. The man had got in at Fiftieth street, the chauffeur told the police. He had seemed to be waiting there."

\* \* \*

We did not have to ask if the woman was Lily. What miracles happen in a great city!



## APPRECIATION

By Patience Trask

SHE was at the symphony concert.

The music was of Tschaikowsky.

Never before had she heard such exquisite tones.

A musician of great renown watched her as she listened to the music.

It was at the last note of the Pastorale from "Manfred" that she clutched her bosom, gazed around the audience with frantic eyes, shrieked shrilly and fell face downward into the aisle.

"A true artist!" breathed the musician as he bent over her.

"My God!" she said as she opened her eyes. "I forgot to turn the fire out under the beans before I left home."





# MY WIFE IS CONTENTED

By George Jameson

**M**Y wife is contented. She takes not the slightest interest in the fashions for the coming season, and no longer complains that her shoes hurt her. I am smoking my favorite and oldest pipe in her bedroom, confident that she will not object to the odour.

My wife is contented. Since I have come home she has not asked me for money, nor has she insinuated that she was mentally deranged when she married me. For more than an hour I have not heard a word about my irreg-

ular habits, nor a murmur against my undesirable associates.

My wife is contented. She does not want to tell me scandal about the neighbors, nor has she attempted to make me sign the pledge. I have not been told I am an unfeeling brute, nor has she wept because I did not kiss her when I entered the house, as I used to do when we were first married.

My wife is contented. As I telephone to the undertaker I try to realize this fact. My wife is conten— It scarcely seems possible!



## ABOVE PAR

By T. F. Mitchell

**T**HERE is something—what shall I say, colossal?—about Clarice; something which makes her stand apart, something mighty, Cyclopean, a breath of the Infinite.

She is different from other girls I know. Whenever I am near her, I have a feeling of something stupendous, a peculiar sense of magnificence and grandeur which it is impossible to describe.

She is unique.

There is something—what shall I say, colossal?—about her.

She wears a No. 12 shoe.



**I**NCONSISTENCY—When a woman displays a trim ankle and then asks your opinion of her new hat.





# BRAMPTON FORD'S LAST BATTLE

By George Jay Smith

BRAMPTON FORD was a battle-scarred veteran of the duel of sex. He might be said to have belonged to the Black Horse Cavalry of soft adventure. Many had been his engagements (in the military, not the marital, sense of the word). His tactics varied. Some women — proud, hard-eyed blondes, for the most part—he had flabbergasted by gallant assault; some—the soft, little, timid sort—had yielded to strategy or mere diplomatic negotiation. Many occupied positions that required special study. Others were themselves masters in the game of war. A few, like Achilles, were all but invulnerable.

Brampton Ford had prided himself on the variety of his conquests. He had shrunk from no adventure, however unpromising, ignored no gauge of battle, however hazardous. Woman, as the mere creature in the generic sense, was an old story to Brampton Ford; but let that knight errant in his wanderings encounter a *woman*, the interesting individual, and straightway his nostrils scented the coming struggle, he was fired with the mania of battle, and nothing would do but he must try his arts.

As fortune had it, Mr. Ford was amply supplied with the sinews of war. For as in the contests of nations mere brains, training, well-drilled soldiery and eternal justice avail not if the cash be lacking wherewith to feed and move the armies; so in the eternal war of the sexes, while beauty, wit, cleverness, and magnetism serve, as it were, for armor and weapons, yet a supply of filthy lucre, the trash of the purse, is ever needful. Many a tender dove of

a woman who will not demand good looks, nor be at home with wit and cleverness, and is by training made proof against electric affinity, will yield flutteringly to the magic of well-creased trousers or the glamour of the latest thing in hats and gloves. The haberdasher is the Vulcan of anti-feminine war. Brampton Ford had been able to devote himself almost exclusively to the great cause, for he had commanded the utmost resources of this maker of amatory armor and weapons.

But now, alas! Mr. Ford was fifty-eight!

Think what that means. Take his case well into consideration.

He was rich, a bachelor, ripe in experience, adept in command of the whole arsenal of love-making, acquainted with the theory and the practice of the art in all its branches, possessed of scarcely another interest in life—but he was fifty-eight! And not very well preserved at that! In fact, the sour tragedy and vinegar of life had long since begun to tell. Forty years of gynocentric endeavor, of feverish endeavor, however successful, will leave scars. Mr. Ford was nervous and pale. No careful plastering of his thin grayish hair could conceal his baldness. There were pouches under his eyes; there were lines that drooped from the corners of his mouth. He was irritable, tired, full of whimsies and fancies. Worse than that, he had lately begun to see things.

It was at twilight on a February day that certain of Mr. Ford's chairs were first observed by him to be behaving peculiarly. In the library and the living-room of his house in New York were



very curious old-fashioned pieces of furniture, descended to him, like his money and his fondness for female beauty, from his estimable grandfather. Some of the chairs were of rosewood, some of mahogany, and some (and those of the most fully upholstered) of baser woods. Mr. Ford regarded these chairs as old friends.

He had come in, fatigued from an afternoon in the club window, spent in watching and appraising the ceaseless procession of beplumaged femininity along the Avenue. How many women there were! Young and lovely ones, too! Mr. Ford, who once would have exulted in the fact, acknowledged it now with a sort of despair. It was all too much for him, the situation was getting beyond him, the numbers of the gay and flaunting enemy overwhelmed him. He had done his best, but to what good, after all? The opposing hosts were mightier and more insolent than ever, they flung to the breeze ever more and more challengingly the banners of finery, and he must soon be resigning, withdrawing the struggle, making way for younger and better men!

He was in a gloomy humor as he sank wearily into his library chair. He sat there alone, in the twilight, silent, with abstracted gaze.

"I must catch up on my sleep," he muttered. "Can't do these late hour affairs as I used. Feeling deucedly seedy."

He relapsed into moodiness, and sat staring at a high-backed mahogany chair which was only in part illuminated by the firelight. Suddenly, while he looked with the dilated attention of surprise, he beheld the chair bow to him, execute a curtsey, and begin to move with arms outstretched and waving! He peered more closely. Why, it was a woman, and something familiar in her face—

"Agnes Langley, I'll be sworn!" he whispered.

Stately and tall, Agnes Langley lived and moved before him, fair of face and winning of manner as when she had

loved him, many years ago. There flooded through him the memory of how basely he had treated her. He felt a tightness about the heart, and his hands clenched. He was about to rise and speak to her entreatingly when he became aware that two chairs to his left were going through curiously artificial motions, in unison. He turned to see what they were doing, and perceived with a start that they were two ballet girls—who were they?—he blinked, trying to make them out—Marie and Lottie?—yes, Lottie and Marie, girls of his at one time, not so many years past. Each with one arm raised, they danced on their toes, moving sideways a few paces, then, with the other arms raised, coming back and whirling on tiptoe till their short skirts fluttered and their taper bodies rotated like tops; all this they did as if to the rhythm of some unheard music.

By this time all the chairs about Brampton Ford had ceased to be chairs and were in the form of women, women he had known. He stared at them with hanging jaw, turning his haggard eyes in the uncertain light from one to another.

There in dim gold plush stood pretty Mrs. Hinterson—"Pinkie" he had called her. She seemed to smile at him mockingly. Beyond, in red, was the dark and tragic beauty of Diane Desmoulins, who had followed him from Paris—he hated to think of that narrow escape now. She leered at him. He forced his gaze away from her. And then, just beyond the fire, he discerned Louisa Hood walking away from him, but with her lovely face, unsmiling, turned toward him, just as she had looked after he had said that last brutal good-bye. And yes, there, far off in the dim corner, his eyes met those of Nellie Tryon—he was his first, years and years ago—he had really loved her . . . but now, as when he told her they were to part, he saw that her sweet blue eyes were filled with tears. The hopeless sadness of her look cut him to the heart. He tried to turn away.



"Oh, don't look so at me," he groaned. Then with an oath he leaped to his feet. "What's come over me?" He tottered to the bell and summoned Rimpole, his butler.

"Yes, sir?" inquired Rimpole.

"Eh—what—did I ring?" He leaned heavily on the table.

"Yes, sir," said Rimpole. "Any orders, sir?"

"Eh—yes. Take that chair out of this room! No, that one in the corner. Take it out—put it in the drawing-room—anywhere!"

"Yes, sir. I will, sir."

"No, do it now. Do it at once!"

And Brampton Ford watched his man carry out Nellie Tryon. Left alone, he looked about the room, still trembling. But the other chairs were just chairs again. He must have been dreaming. Still, he would go out to supper and see a play. He could not spend the evening alone—impossible!

From that time forth, the chairs in Mr. Ford's library were again and again bewitched. A few evenings later he had come home at nine. He was scarcely settled comfortably when the chairs began the same antics, in which he saw nothing grotesque, but something bitter and dreadful. Once more the women of yesteryear danced or smiled or wept about him. Some behaved immodestly, advancing toward him while he shrank back unresponsive, white and terrified. Others groveled in the abandonment of grief, stirring him with horrible remorse.

When this wretched nightmare visited him, always some one woman became more poignantly vivid, more pitiful, more torturing to him than any of the rest, till Brampton Ford, strung to the breaking point, would with difficulty find speech and burst the spell that held him, get to his feet, ring for his servant, gulp some brandy, and order the astonished but obedient Rimpole to remove from the room the most offending chair. This happened several times, until one by one nearly all the chairs had been banished. Still he dared not be alone with those which

remained. What a pass he was come to! Must he have no chairs at all? Was he losing his mind?

"It's something in that room," he muttered one afternoon as he came heavily homeward. "I'll sit in another room hereafter. They can't drive me out of my whole house."

So this day, breaking a habit of thirty years, he went to a room on the second floor. The day was bitter cold, and he basked in the glow of the fire. Then for a while he tried to read; but something on the page reminded him of years long past. His hands fell upon his knees, and he found himself gazing into the face of "Pinkie" Hinterson again! Rimpole—curse his stupidity!—had placed that chair of dim gold plush in this room, and it would infect all the other chairs with the ghastly enchantment that had grown so hateful to him. The soulless, pretty, smiling face of "Pinkie" wore a mocking and triumphant expression. She raised one arm as if in command, and straightway the trembling and obsessed old man—for he was old, very old, at fifty-eight—saw all the other chairs in the room melt into human forms. They became women he had known. Some he scarcely remembered, but as he peered, fascinated, he recognized a look in each one, even in those in the dimmest corners.

He was unable to move.

One after another the women were catching his attention, when Mr. Ford found himself wondering who it was that held him. For he was strongly clasped in the arms of a woman whose face he could not see. Her hands were coarse and strong. Her breath smelt of liquor. He tried in vain to twist around so as to see her face. He struggled and tugged to be free. Then he shrieked,

"Let me go! Let me go! You wench! You monster! A curse on the whole tribe of women! Fire and damnation! Let me go! Let me—"

The door opened and Rimpole entered.

"Did you call, sir?"



White and perspiring, his master stood shaking, leaning against the mantel.

"No—yes. Brandy." He spoke so huskily that Rimpole scarcely heard. He swallowed a quantity of the spirit.

"Rimpole," he said at last, "I'm going away for a while—going south. Get my things ready at once, do you hear? Let's see, this is the—"

"The third of March, sir."

"I'll go tomorrow. I shan't sleep at home tonight, Rimpole."

Mr. Ford's eyes at this moment happened to fall upon the chair that had been "Pinkie" Hinterson. Immediately he saw her face forming as if out of a mist. She was grinning at him in derision. In another instant all of her would be there, and the other chairs would again begin playing their parts in their hideous game. Speaking rapidly and in a voice that rose to an insane shriek, Mr. Ford cried,

"Take her away! She did it all, curse her! She egged the others on! You damnable wench! You she-devil! Oh, take her away!—take her away!"

He was kicking and striking at the chair in a blind fury. Rimpole hurriedly dragged it from the room. When he returned, Mr. Ford had fallen to the floor and was mumbling over and over,

"Curse them all! Damn them all!"

Rimpole lifted him, saying,

"Come, sir, you're not well. Shall I send for the doctor, sir? You've—you've been overworking, sir."

Overworking! Even at the moment Brampton Ford saw the joke of that.

"No," he said, feebly but authoritatively. "I want no doctor. I'm all sound enough. But I need a change. I'll go south tomorrow."

Mr. Ford went south. It was a happy thought, for he escaped his tormentors. Once free from their presence, he recovered something of his former poise. Gradually a little color came into his faded cheeks. He trimmed his white moustache, that had grown ragged. He carefully brushed the lock that caressed his crown. Yes,

he was quite himself again; for he had begun to look with much interest upon a certain lovely girl of twenty, whose table was next his in the great dining-room of the hotel. He managed to be presented to her, he transferred himself to her table, he besieged her with delicate attentions.

But Adelaide Morton was impervious to the elderly gentleman's advances. He hung round her for two months, he beleaguered her, he laid mines, he cut off all avenues of relief, he bombarded her with flowers and candies, he brought to bear all his arsenal of blandishments. In vain. She smiled at his most skilful endeavors. It seemed that the slowly acquired art, the valued training of forty years, went for nothing!

One day, at an unfrequented spot by the dunes of the long beach, Mr. Ford went a bit too far. With a cold smile, which came perilously near being a sneer, the girl remarked,

"Don't you think you are rather too old, Mr. Ford, to play the fool this way? Thank you, I prefer to walk back alone."

In those words, "too old," there was a bitter sting. An old fool? Was he really done for? He stared out over the blue water. Bah! There were other women. He would look round a bit. But the fact was, this Adelaide Morton had got into his blood—what there was left of it. He couldn't keep his eyes off her. He tried to regain his former footing with her, but she persistently refused to recognize him again. He felt more humiliated than angry. But at length he became discouraged. He telegraphed one day to Rimpole:

"Have ready house at Morley. Coming there Friday."

At Morley was Mr. Ford's country home. Rimpole at once went down there. Now this house had never been sufficiently furnished, in Rimpole's opinion. This May was unusually chilly, and he found the Morley rooms decidedly bare and uncomfortable. Coming to the place from the luxurious



warmth of the city house, Rimpole felt it cold, barnlike, in a word impossible. A happy thought occurred to Rimpole. There were all those handsome chairs Mr. Ford had found unnecessary at home. Why not ship them to Morley? With the trusted and responsible Rimpole, to decide was to do. He sent a wagon load of the superfluous furniture down to the country house.

On a cool evening in May he had his master met at Morley station.

Mr. Ford was irritable and fatigued after his long journey. In moody silence he entered his lonely house, without a glance at the sprouting garden-beds or the well-kept lawns and shrubberies.

"Some whiskey, Rimpole," he ordered as he sank dejectedly into an armchair in the large dining-room with the seaward windows. The evening was so chilly that Rimpole had had a fire made on the open hearth.

"Here, sir," said the foreseeing Rimpole. "Dinner will be served in half an hour, sir." Mr. Ford said nothing, and Rimpole retired.

Mr. Ford stared at the fire. He wished he was back in the warmer climate. He wished that that Morton girl—suddenly a something moving at the left caught his attention. He turned with a swift premonitory trembling. Then he groaned. He recognized many of the too familiar chairs from his library in the city house. He was at once angry, mystified and frightened. As he gazed, unable to stir, seized with the old obsession, he watched these horrible chairs develop women's faces and pass into human proportions. The cold sweat came out upon him. He stared in an agony of expectancy, to see again the faces of Diane Desmoulins, of Agnes Langley, of the chorus girls, of Pinkie Hinton, of Louisa Hood, and all the rest.

But at first he recognized none of these. This was strange. Yet whose faces were they? He knew them. But there was a terrible change. He no longer saw these once admired women as they had been, but as they were

now! Gradually this fearful difference dawned upon him. Agnes Langley was old and wrinkled—there she was—he recognized her in spite of the shocking change, and he shuddered. Then he saw the French woman near by, with a ghastly, toothless leer, drunken, bepainted, degraded. She shook her fists at him angrily, and he cowered helpless.

Yes, he began to recognize them all now, in spite of the ravages of time. Pasty-faced, ugly, sour, were some of them; dignified, disapproving, white-haired, were others; and yet others, a few, seemed to keep something of youth and beauty. They began to move. They circled about him, threatening, glaring wildly at him, advancing, retreating. More and more violently they moved. Some struck him in the face, some pulled at him and pinched him.

On entering he had noticed a delicate gold chair by the door. It was now Adelaide Morton! Oh, she was brilliant with the pride of unconquered youth! She leaped upon a table, and there, raised above the rest of the rout, she directed the attack. She laughed derisively, the others followed in a cackle of jeers and curses. She signaled for an onset, and all together they rushed toward him. All but three or four, who stood aside, unmoving, silent. He observed these now for the first time. Who were they? Why were they so different from the rest? How pale they were! Ah!—a thrill of dread shot through him—these were the ghosts of girls now dead! Among them he saw in the shadow at one side Nellie Tryon, who had loved him the first. She looked at him fixedly and, as it seemed, with pity. But he knew her for dead, and an icy chill crept into his blood. He stared at her, frozen with dark misgiving and horror.

The rest came wrathfully toward him. He bestirred himself and tried to rise to escape them. He struggled and panted. The same coarse, strong hands of an unknown woman held him as before, only the hands were wrinkled now. He tugged and cursed and



twisted. Around him the other women rushed in a furious revel. They trampled him, struck him, spat upon him. With a gasp of supreme effort he tore himself free from the hag who held him, and fled—fled round and round the room. Then with shrieks and curses he began to fight and belabor his persecutors with blows, with kicks, with strangle holds. He screamed with the wild excitement of the struggle and with the cold fear that compressed and tortured his heart. He began gasping for breath.

He thought he heard Nellie Tryon call his name. He turned to her dead face. She was nodding slowly and sadly, and she raised her hand as if to summon him. He could not look away from her. Paralyzed with horror, he sank amid the wreckage of the chairs.

Rimpole burst into the room.

"For God's sake, sir, what is the matter?" he blurted out.

His master was lying in a heap on the floor. Brampton Ford had fought and lost his last battle.



## BLOW, YE BLITHE AIRS

By Clinton Scollard

**B**LOW, ye blithe airs, from out the depths of morning;  
 Azure and living gold the whole world wears;  
 My love's awake, her comeliness adorning;  
 Blow, ye blithe airs!

Blow, ye blithe airs, across the paths of noonday;  
 The joy of life each vale and height declares;  
 My love's abroad, and glories in the June day;  
 Blow, ye blithe airs!

Blow, ye blithe airs, the twilight meadows roaming;  
 The roses droop, the firefly's lanthorn flares;  
 My love awaits me somewhere in the gloaming;  
 Blow, ye blithe airs!

Blow, ye blithe airs, the midnight stars are gleaming  
 Down all the far celestial thoroughfares!  
 My love—but soft, lest ye disturb her dreaming,  
 Blow, ye blithe airs!



**S**PICE, to some women, is the only variety of life.





# THE OBSEQUIES

By J. L. Morgan

## WHO'S WHO

THE DECEASED, *the mortal remains of James H. Blutcher.*

THE REV. WILLARD P. WOBBLE, *officiating minister.*

MR. GASKETT, *of Gaskett & Herz, Embalmers.*

JUDGE HORATIO H. HAWPER, *attorney of deceased.*

FLORENCE BODKIN, *cousin and next of kin of deceased.*

ELMER BODKIN, *her husband.*

UNKNOWN WOMAN, *mysterious and a peach.*

AUGUST P. DUMBECK, *an unwilling pallbearer.*

BILLY GRANT  
NED HOWELL  
DOC CLARK

} *pals of the deceased.*

*Friends, Near-Friends, Funeral Fiends, Taxi Drivers, Servants, Etc.*

SCENE: *The veranda of a fashionable residence on a summer afternoon. Blutcher, a rich bachelor of past middle age, has died at his club, and the services are held at the home of the Bodkins', who have always hated him. A hearse and a long line of autos are at the curb in front of the house, and hanging on the fences in the adjacent yards are a number of children and negro servants who stare in awed and wide-eyed fascination. The men, for the greater part, gather on the wide veranda; the women pass inside.*

*A taxi draws up to the curb and Judge Hawper, a large, impressive looking man, gets out.*

TAXI DRIVER:

*(A bleary-eyed, red-nosed, sleep-famished person.)* Say, mister, who's dead?

JUDGE HAWPER:

*(Reaching in his pocket for the fare.)*  
Mr. James Blutcher . . . How much do I owe you?

TAXI DRIVER:

*(In sudden astonishment.)* What?  
Not old Jim Blutcher?

JUDGE HAWPER:

*(Sternly.)* I said Mister Blutcher.

TAXI DRIVER:

Sure! That's the guy. Used to live at the Union Club and was stewed all the time. . . . Chiropody of the liver, I reckon. It gets 'em all. . . . Many a time I've driv old Blutch and—

JUDGE HAWPER:

*(Severely.)* Never mind that! What do I owe you?

TAXI DRIVER:

*(Sullenly.)* Four dollars. *(He does not expect to get it and he starts in with a whine.)* Honest to Gawd, mister, I'm not robbin' you, I—



JUDGE HAWPER:

Oh, shut up! Here. (*He hands the driver the money and turns to go.*)

TAXI DRIVER:

(*Still whining.*) Want me to haul you out to the cemetery, governor? I'll make you a special rate for the trip.

[HAWPER shakes his head and walks rapidly up to the house.]

TAXI DRIVER:

(*Speeding up his engine and opening his cut-out.*) Well, damn that old stiff, he never gave me no tip! (*He disappears down the street in a roaring exhaust of sickening white smoke.*)

[HAWPER mounts the steps of the veranda, nods to acquaintances, and is solemnly greeted by the undertaker, MR. GASKETT, who, in spite of HAWPER'S attempted evasion, slips him a suggestively cold hand.]

MR. GASKETT:

(*Consulting a soiled red memorandum book.*) Ah, Judge, I see that you are one of the pallbearers. Very good, very good. (*He proffers HAWPER a pair of white cotton gloves.*) I'll let you know when—when it's time.

HAWPER:

(*Quickly.*) Some mistake, Mr. Gaskett. I'm an honorary pallbearer. Fact is (*he looks at his watch*) I—I've got to get back to my office at three. A very important conference, Mr. Gaskett, very important indeed.

MR. GASKETT:

(*To whom all known excuses are familiar, thinks: What a fat old liar you are!*) Ah, yes. (*Unctuously.*) I understand, Judge, I understand. An unfortunate mistake, but one that can be easily rectified, easily rectified. (*He tiptoes around the veranda, making whispered solicitations to fill the JUDGE'S place, but apparently without success.*)

SOLEMN YOUTH:

(*To a group of men at the end of the*

*veranda.*) Who do you think will win the series? I got ten on the Giants.

[*The men stare at him without answering and the youth moves down the veranda, looking for a less congealing atmosphere.*]

A PARROT:

(*On the front porch of the house next door.*) Oh, Charley! O Charley! (*Then rapidly.*) Go to the devil! Go to the devil!

MEN ON THE VERANDA:

(*In unison.*) Damn that parrot!

[*An automobile draws up out in front and three men get out. They are BILLY GRANT, NED HOWELL and DOC CLARK, club friends of the deceased, and all very pleasantly jingled. They are grinning, having on the way been enjoying some stories at the expense of the late Mr. James Blutcher, and they pull long faces with some difficulty. They approach the house, and, being pallbearers, MR. GASKETT hastens to greet them.*]

[*At this moment MR. ELMER BODKIN, at whose home the services are to be held, looks through the window and, seeing HAWPER, decides to find out at once a certain thing that has for the past few days given himself and his wife great anxiety. He comes out on the veranda and greets HAWPER.*]

MR. BODKIN:

(*Adjusting his expression to something between a smile and a sigh.*) Ah, Judge, how are you? (*He reaches out his hand to HAWPER, who has an aversion to shaking hands with anybody. HAWPER pretends not to notice, but BODKIN succeeds by sheer persistence and deposits in HAWPER'S palm a hand that is warm and moist.*) A mighty sad occasion, Judge, mighty sad. We were both, Florence and I, so fond of dear old Jim. Florence was a great favorite with him, a great favorite. (*He motions HAWPER to the edge of the veranda, out of earshot of the others.*) Judge, did er—did Jim leave a will?



HAWPER:

(Grimly, as he wipes his wet palm on the seat of his trousers.) He did.

BODKIN:

(Surprised and with thumping heart, for his wife is the deceased's closest of kin.) He did? Well, Judge, may I ask—er—may I ask the provisions of it?

HAWPER:

(Looking at him gloomily, but with secret elation, thinks: Now, you slimy old hypocrite, I am about to hand you some news that will spoil your day.) Mr. Bodkin, I know that you will rejoice with me when I tell you that our friend has been very philanthropic. (He pauses to let this sink in.) Yes, Mr. Blutcher has remembered—very generously, I should say—the poor and the unfortunate. . . . He has left his entire estate to St. Paul's Orphan Home.

BODKIN:

(Staggered at the tidings and grasping wildly.) He did, you say? The poor man was unbalanced! Yes, the doctor said—or will say—that he has been out of his head for a month.

HAWPER:

But he made his will a year or more ago.

BODKIN:

(Catching at straws.) Then he may have made a later one. Yes, that's no doubt what he has done. He as much as told Florence—

HAWPER:

(Shaking his head sorrowfully.) No. As his attorney I can vouch for the fact that there is no later one. He was very fond of the dear little orphans, Mr. Bodkin, and— (BODKIN waits to hear no more, but hastens inside to break the news to his wife.)

[A fat clubman puffs up the steps. It is MR. AUGUST P. DUMBECK, and it is plain to see that he is in no pleasant frame of mind.]

BILLY GRANT:

(Greeting him genially.) Hello, Dumbeck, you here?

DUMBECK:

(With elaborate sarcasm.) No, I'm sitting in my office downtown 'tending to business. (He glares at GRANT.) What jackass was it that picked me for a pallbearer? God knows I never knew Blutcher very well. And now I'm wasting the whole afternoon. (He paces the veranda, mumbling.)

GRANT:

(To his two friends.) Well, what do you know about that!

DOC CLARK:

Let's give the old devil the end handle and make him do all the heavy.

[The minister arrives, a tall, gaunt old man in a faded black Prince Albert. He has the beard of a patriarch of old, and the godless chauffeurs out on the street are rather loudly imitating the staccato nicker of a billy goat. Mrs. Bodkin, with a view to the smartness of the occasion, had hoped for an Episcopalian minister, but the REV. WOBBLE, of the Methodist faith, was a tenant of her husband's—and behind in his rent. He passes inside.]

SOLEMN YOUTH:

(To DUMBECK.) Who do you think will win the series? I have a bet on the Giants.

DUMBECK:

(Glaring at youth.) What giants? What in hell are you talking about? (Then, as the query seems vaguely to him to pertain to sport, he goes on.) Is it football? How in the name of God should I know? I've got a business to 'tend to! I ought to be there now. And here I am wasting the afternoon with mail on my desk a foot high. I—

[The youth flees inside and DUMBECK continues to a small, scared-looking man whom no one knows and who is probably there for a free ride.]



[*The telephone rings—an oversight on the part of GASKETT's assistant, for he has forgotten to muffle it. No one answers and it rings again, long and insistently. MR. GASKETT swears under his breath. A woman finally takes the receiver off the hook with the purpose of stopping the noise, and then, suddenly curious, says: "Hello." And a moment later MR. BILLY GRANT, out on the veranda, is informed that he is wanted at the 'phone.*]

GRANT:

(*To his friends.*) It's the office calling. I gave my stenographer Bodkin's number in case of anything extra important. (*He makes his way inside to the telephone on the library table. Several folding chairs have to be moved before he can get to it. As he places the receiver to his ear the fifty or more people in the room fold their hands and wait in leisure curiosity to hear what they may hear.*) Yes, this is Grant. What is it? (*The voice on the wire is not the one that he expected to hear and he registers "surprise."* He listens for a moment and then he muzzles his mouth into the transmitter in the delusion that by so doing he will speak in privacy.) But listen, dearie, I'm out here to a funeral. . . . No, I'm not lying to you. . . . No, dearie, you are all wrong. (*The silent fifty nudge and kick each other on the shins in ecstasy.*) Really, I can't talk to you now. . . . I tell you it's a funeral. Can't you understand? . . . A funeral—Jim Blutchter's funeral. . . . What's the matter with him? Nothing except he's dead. . . . I didn't say anything about bed. I said dead. . . . Jim Blutchter is dead . . . dead . . . DEAD! . . . Call me up at the club after five. (*He slams the receiver on the hook and exits, red of face and perspiring freely.*)

GASKETT:

(*To JUDGE HAWPER, whom GASKETT has just learned, by the secret and devious channels known only to undertakers, will be executor of the estate*

*of the deceased and to whom he must present his bill.*) A very handsome turnout, Judge. And a very nice-looking crowd. I take quite a pride in it. I said to Mr. Herz: "We must give Mr. Blutchter the finest casket in stock—the very finest." And it is. Pressed copper—no soldered joints, you understand; mahogany panels, filigreed; the best of satin lining; solid silver handles—a mighty handsome job throughout. It's the very latest thing—what we call a side-drop—no lid to screw on or anything like that. It's the same kind we furnished J. P. Epperson—and you know he was one of the richest men in town. Yes, sir, Judge, very few people can afford them. I said to Mr. Herz—

HAWPER:

Excuse me. There is a man I must see immediately. (*He disengages himself from GASKETT and walks to the other end of the veranda and talks to a man whom he has never seen before about the weather.*)

DOC CLARK:

(*To GRANT, as he comes out of the house.*) Did the office get you?

GRANT:

Yes. It was a telegram that I had been expecting all morning and—(*his voice slowly dies away and he clutches the arms of his friends.*) Look! A peach, take it from me. [*They all stare at a beautiful woman who pauses at the door and looks wistfully in.*]

DOC CLARK:

(*Pop-eyed with admiration.*) You said something, Bill! A pippin! (*He straightens his tie, and taking off his hat brushes it on the sleeve of his coat.*) Who is she?

NED HOWELL:

(*Pulling down his vest and arranging the set of his collar.*) I don't know her name. But she was quite a friend of Jim's. Used to see them at all the tango cafés. Some fox-trotter, believe me!



[Through the open door REV. WOBBLE is heard.]

REV. WOBBLE:

Friends (a long, impressive pause) the wages of Sin is Death—the wages of Sin is Death.

PARROT:

(On porch next door.) Oh, Charley! Oh, Charley-y! Go to the devil! Go to the devil!

[The beautiful woman near the door turns her head, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. Inside can be heard the sobs of Mrs. Bodkin—who has just learned a certain distressing fact from her husband. Her grief seems—and is—very real.]

REV. WOBBLE:

(Resuming.) Friends and brethren, I never knew Mr. Blutchter personally. I have been told that he was a very dissipated man, a sinner—

BILLY GRANT:

(With indignation.) Well, what do you know about that! Just listen to that old dub knockin' Jim!

DOC CLARK:

(Still staring at the beautiful woman.) Is he?

[Several belated old women funeral fiends now arrive and make some confusion in elbowing their way into the crowded room. One is heard to ask another: "Who was he?" GASKETT's assistant carries in three more folding chairs and opens the first two with professional and noiseless skill; the third one sticks and resists all his efforts for a moment—only to suddenly unfold with a bang, catching his knuckles like the jaws of a bear-trap. Exit assistant, red-faced and swearing silently.]

SMARTLY GOWNED WOMAN:

(To her companion.) Lean your head over this way and you can see her. She's standing just outside the hall door.

THE OTHER ONE:

(Craning her head and staring.) So that's the one, is it? . . . Well, I will say Jim dressed her well . . . Look at those rings! (To herself: I wish he had given them to me.) She's no taste, though. Got on everything but the kitchen stove.

SMARTLY GOWNED WOMAN:

Oh, look! Mrs. Hooper is going to sing. I haven't been to a funeral in five years that that woman didn't get the spot with a song. They tell me she gets from twenty dollars up.

[A tremendously fat woman now arises at the end of the room and gets rid of a solo—flat and considerably off key.]

BILLY GRANT:

I think that would make old Jim turn over in his coffin. Pretty punk! I was at a cabaret last night and there was a woman there what could sing rings around this party. And she was good to look at, too!

NED HOWELL:

(Looking at his watch.) How long is this thing going to keep up? Wonder if Bodkin's got a drink hid around the house?

BILLY GRANT:

(Brightening at the thought.) Wait here. I'll go and ask him. (He goes to the door and hisses softly, motioning BODKIN into the hall, where he confers with him earnestly. He returns glumly to his friends, shaking his head.) Nothin' doin'.

[People begin to come out now, indicating that the services are over. MR. GASKETT appears in the doorway and silently motions the pallbearers inside.]

DOC CLARK:

Come on, boys. And remember now, give old Dumbuck the end handle.

[Some get into their machines at once; others line the walk and wait. Presently all that is mortal of James H.



*Blutcher appears, and struggling with the end of the casket, crimson of face and with his jugulars bulging over the top of his collar, is* AUGUST P. DUMBECK. *The casket is finally slid into the hearse and the three friends get into their machine.*

BILLY GRANT:  
(*Wiping his forehead.*) Well, boys,

it's a short haul, and then back to the club on high. I'm dead for a drink.

NED HOWELL:  
(*Lighting a cigar.*) You said something, Bill.

DOC CLARK:  
(*Lighting a cigarette.*) Right-o!  
[CURTAIN]



## FEMINA

By Charles S. Zerner

FOR fully an hour she combed and brushed her hair. She bathed her face and then massaged it. She rouged her lips and donned her most becoming frock. The last drop of a rare perfume was used to enhance the effect of a hundred artifices. A final glance at her mirrored reflection elicited a smile of satisfaction.

Then she gayly tripped downstairs and told the waiting young man that she had duly considered his offer of marriage but loved another.



## MIRACLES

By Morris Gilbert

I'M sighing whiles and wishing sore  
For things that cannot be,  
And bruising back the living hopes  
That riot over me;

I'm gay and dreaming for the thing  
A talisman would do,  
But oh, I'm fearful when I see  
The wonders that come true.



SOCIETY is divided into men and supper-men.



# THE KITCHEN AMOURETTE

By Mifflin Crane

THE Hendries had a maid last year whom they called Louise. They remembered her name because she had been an exception among hired girls, for she accomplished her work efficiently and well. While she was with them she seemed to have no other thought. She remained in their employ several months, giving herself up to cooking and dusting with an abandon that was almost passionate; she worked fervently as if she served not the Hendries, who paid her money, but an unseen and pagan household god. And then, for no discernible reason, she resigned her situation and when her mistress attempted to question for her motive she displayed almost an animosity. With Louise departed the efficiency of the Hendrie flat, a brief period of good cooking and clean carpets that remained only as a wistful reminiscence.

The girl before Louise had suffered a declension of ability through nearly four months. Mrs. Hendrie was on the point of discharging her when she pleaded a sick mother in Virginia and went out into the world with a large straw suitcase, never to return. Her departure came about in the afternoon; the next morning Mrs. Hendrie telephoned an employment agency. Later in the day they sent her Louise.

At the first glance Louise inspired confidence. Her countenance was a good augury, for it suggested precision, freedom from frivolity, a stern animosity to dirt. She was generously builded, after the proportions of the Venus of Milo. Pretty Mrs. Hendrie passed her charming blue eye over this woman of Amazon mould and engaged

her with a high hope. Her expectations met with no disappointment.

Louise went into the kitchen. A stack of unwashed dishes confronted her. She deftly attached an apron to her person and entered upon the business of cleaning up. Her efficiency was manifest at once, and before her strategies the piles of soiled crockery disappeared like sugar in a solvent. As she worked her face betrayed no emotion, save an intentness, made visible by a slight fork between her eyebrows. In her absorption, in the directness of her movements, there was something machine-like. She appeared detached, curiously unhuman, aloof from the emotions common to mankind. This was the impression Mrs. Hendrie had of her.

Yet, just before preparing luncheon, Louise did a singular thing. She stepped to the swinging door that communicated with the hall and stood there a moment, listening. She then crossed to the kitchen table and sat down. Pushing aside her apron, she drew out a paper-covered book from some pocket-contrivance fashioned in the amplitude of her dress. She opened the book and began to read.

As her eye passed along the printed lines the slight fork between her eyebrows intensified; her face was otherwise impassive. It seemed in keeping with her character that the volume should be one dealing with the more abstruse questions of domestic science. Nevertheless, at the sound of footsteps in the corridor, Louise closed the book quickly, and for a second, before it disappeared under the stuff of her dress, a lithographed cover was visible. On



this were represented, colourfully, the portraits of a black-haired woman with very large eyes, who lay inertly, like a wax figure, in the arms of an incredibly tall gentleman dressed in evening clothes. It was scarcely a cook book.

During the afternoon Louise consulted the book no further. She was engaged in going over the flat with an electric cleaner and a dust cloth. In the space of a few hours the rooms underwent a metamorphosis, as if from conjury. When Hendrie returned in the evening he was astonished at the change.

Louise had her first glimpse of Hendrie as she brought a tureen of consommé into the dining-room.

"This is Mr. Hendrie," said her mistress.

Louise made a short, stiff inclination of her body, but uttered no word. She did not appear to look at him. Her face remained as impassive as a plate.

Yet she saw him. She observed his jetty hair that had a sheen to it like sable, with a white line, at the part, running through the center. She observed his grandiose black moustache upon which he lavished unguents and pomades. He was a large, pale-faced, hairy man—his intimates applied to him the descriptive pseudonym 'Furs'—and in Louise's eye he was incredibly handsome. Something stirred in her blood and she experienced what amounted to a thrill, that had no outward reflection. She stood by the table a moment and then withdrew.

"What do you think of her, Tom?" asked Mrs. Hendrie.

"She can cook," said Hendrie.

"Yes, she seems to be able to do everything. We're lucky!"

"You wouldn't call her vivacious. You wouldn't say that she was overflowing with feeling!"

"No. She appears to be an artist in her particular field, minus the disadvantage of a temperament."

In the kitchen Louise stood a moment, staring down at the floor. Her shoulders rose slowly, then fell; the whisper of a gust of air passing be-

tween her lips sounded in the room; she sighed. She took up a platter containing a beefsteak garnished with strips of sweet peppers, and passed through the kitchen into the dining-room.

## II

LOUISE, the domestic scientist, was a novel-reader. The works she favoured were bound in paper and she read them until they disintegrated from the erosion of long thumbing. She lived in the houses of princes, drank the scenes of their magnificence like a wine, and thrilled with onlooking at great amours. She had the acquaintance of sublimated men and therefore admitted no amorous milkmen to her kitchen. The swirls of dust when she swept the floors were the clouds of her dreams.

On the cover of her favourite romance, the last of her reading, was a coloured portrait of the Prince di Beluomo. Filled with the knowledge of the prince's exploits, his bravery, his steadfastness, his eloquence as a lover, Louise looked upon the chromo of him with a wistful eye and a melancholy heart. She fixed his image upon her mind like the impress of a carved steel plate. He was slender and dark, like the night, his jetty moustache and sable hair glistened like a freshly polished stove. He was the embodiment, as had been no other, of Louise's ideal. And she found this man suddenly in the flesh when she first waited upon her new employer, Mr. Hendrie.

She was instantly in love. The world of grease and pans in which she moved became indistinct, ghostly, and she performed its offices with mechanical and undirected efficiency while her thoughts and her faculty of imagination were occupied with fervent emotions. She watched Hendrie at his meals and carried away images of him to dream of at night. She placed herself in the hall to take his coat as he returned in the evening, and she observed the exquisite gallantry with which he kissed his wife. Meanwhile, she made an im-



mense impression with her domestic excellences.

Both the Hendries watched her with increasing delight. They viewed her absorption in her work; her thought of nothing else. Her impassivity, her aloofness from all that was unconcerned with housekeeping astonished them, seemed almost marvelous to them. Mrs. Hendrie was quickly convinced that she could easily leave her flat in the sole charge of Louise for two or three weeks at least. For more than a year she had planned to visit her mother and sister, but had never discovered anyone to whom she could entrust the domestic comfort of her husband. Louise was that person, as if divinely sent, in answer to an unspoken prayer.

"Louise," said Mrs. Hendrie, "I am thinking of making a little visit out of the city for a few weeks. Do you think you could manage things here alone?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Louise.

"You know the time that Mr. Hendrie likes his dinner. You know the things he prefers to eat. Are you sure you could attend to all that? Just the same as when I am here?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Louise.

"And keep everything running as smoothly as it is now? And have Mr. Hendrie's breakfast ready for him on time?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Louise.

Mrs. Hendrie was convinced. She made her final plans with her husband. They both laughed at the stolidity with which Louise had assumed all responsibility.

Louise helped Mrs. Hendrie to pack. She spoke only in monosyllables, and chiefly the words of negation and affirmation, so that conversation with her was not vivacious. But she very deftly distributed clothes in a trunk, having a genius for the economy of space. She said good-bye with an unmoved countenance, and returned to the kitchen, where she engaged potatoes for half an hour with a paring knife.

But she had thoughts that, finding

no outlet in outward expression, the more powerfully moved her inner being. In a few hours, she knew, that magnificent male, the Prince of her reading, would return and be alone with her. She would bring in his supper as he sat solitary before the white cloth. She was not impatient for his coming; she waited, fatalistically sure of his coming.

She heard him enter the flat and the noise of his tread in the corridor came to her ears rhythmically, like the pulse of a stirring music. He passed through the dining-room and entered the kitchen; she turned and saw him. He had not yet removed his coat and hat and he stood in the door, smiling.

"Good evening, Louise," said he. "How are you making out?"

"All right, sir," said Louise.

"Supper ready soon?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Louise.

He turned, leaving the room with a sense of contentment. He congratulated himself on being well-harboured, provided for, watched over by one who was as if inspired divinely by the sole thought of her domestic offices.

Presently she touched the dinner gong and he came in to his dinner. Serving him the first course, Louise hesitated at the table; she desired to converse with him; she didn't know what to say. Noticing her standing near, Hendrie looked at her; she was staring off across the room; her eye was vacant.

"She's a little absent-minded," thought Hendrie.

She brought him his meat and vegetables and knew an inward, concealed thrill when her arm brushed his coat-sleeve in serving him. Again she stood near him a moment, watching his white hands as they held the knife and fork. She observed that the fingers were long—like those of the Prince di Beluomo. That was aristocratic.

He was finally ready for his coffee, which he took last. Louise was now inflated with an amorous delight, like a rubber bladder blown up very hard. Her desire of conversation was vastly



increased. She stood in the kitchen, a silver coffee-pot in one hand, rehearsing a gracious and imaginary dialogue.

"My Lord, do you find the viands to your palate?"

"They are most admirable, maiden."

"Their confection was consummated with loving care, my Lord!"

"Do you mean . . ."

LOUISE (*dropping to one knee*): "Forgive one so humble—"

THE PRINCE (*raising her tenderly to her feet and clasping her in his strong arms*): "I have watched your love in silence and tested it by waiting. I know now that you love me truly. Know, then, that I love you. What matters it if between us there is the gulf of the palace and the humble cottage? Love has wings to bridge all—"

With a start, Louise observed that the coffee was cooling, whereat she placed the pot on a tray, together with a cup and saucer, and moved toward the dining-room.

She poured his coffee and stood waiting.

Hendrie looked up.

"What is it, Louise?"

"Nothing, sir. . . ."

"You're sure you didn't want to speak to me about anything?"

"No, sir."

Louise withdrew. In the kitchen she gave herself a short, abortive little hug.

She had talked to him, after all!

### III

It was a frightfully trying situation for Louise, torn with the passion of love.

Every morning at breakfast she waited upon him alone; every evening at dinner she waited upon him alone. She was a person who adhered to a moral code, but the cumulative effect of daily provocation was an immense load for the sustaining power of her virtue.

Moreover, after he had eaten his dinner he was never far distant from her

until he departed in the morning. As she sat in the kitchen she could hear him moving about in the sitting-room. Later, she heard him go to bed. Passing to her own bedroom, she frequently detected the sound of his snoring. It was a dreadful intimacy.

On the ninth evening of Mrs. Hendrie's absence, Louise prepared him an especially notable dinner.

"Louise," he said, when he had finished, "you certainly know how to cook. I'll never forget you!"

Louise returned to the kitchen in a turmoil of inward emotion. Her passion, provoked for weeks to a point of unstable equilibrium, as if touched by a spark leapt at his words into the flame of an immense love. She dropped to the stiff kitchen chair and sat there for many moments, motionless, expressionless, like a bulk of carved stone, inwardly consumed.

Presently she arose and drew the dish-water. Her operations were conducted mechanically; she listened for the sound of his footsteps; her ear caught each one of his movements. When she had finished she went to her room, fixed on a desperate resolve.

With fatalistic patience, she waited. After an hour or two she heard Hendrie come out of the sitting-room and walk through the hall. He turned into his bedroom. Her ear detected the sound of his shoes, dropped on the floor. She still waited.

The flat grew quiet. Louise stood up and walked softly to her door, opened it, passing into the hall. A jutting clothes-closet cut her off from the main corridor, and she was about to pass this when she heard the sound of Hendrie's door opening.

Like a conspirator, Louise peered around the edge of the closet. She saw then that the light in the sitting-room had been left burning; Hendrie was returning to extinguish it.

Her intent had been desperate and wicked. Her love had quite overcome her restraints. Now, as she peeped around the corner of the clothes-closet, Louise saw Hendrie, attired in white



and black pajamas, passing up through the hall. The masculine pajamas flapped about his legs; an inch of bare ankle twinkled above the floor. To Louise's cheek came a blush. In her heart a fear started forth. She was suddenly conscious of his dreadful masculinity; the mannish night-dress frightened her. At once, like a recalled exile, her modesty returned to her, made her conscious of her slipping virtue, charging her with fear. Quite terrified, she ran back into her room. She turned the key in the lock.

The next morning she placed his breakfast before him with great stolidity. As he was drinking his coffee, she brought in the mail. He slit the top of a letter and read it.

"Louise," he said, "here is news. Mrs. Hendrie is returning today."

"Yes, sir," said Louise.

"She's coming into the city this morning. I'll meet her. Do you think you could have a little lunch ready for us?"

"Yes, sir," said Louise.

She went about preparing luncheon methodically. She concocted an admirable salad. When this was done, she touched up several of the rooms with a dust cloth. Just about noon she heard Hendrie and Mrs. Hendrie come in. Mrs. Hendrie greeted her and commended her on the appearance of the flat.

Louise began the service of the luncheon. Hendrie and his wife were both in high spirits. They seemed immensely pleased to be together again. As Louise brought in the exquisite salad, she caught them in the act of kissing.

She stared a moment; they did not see her; she returned to the kitchen. The glimpse of Hendrie, pressing his magnificent black moustache against his wife's face, filled her with a quick, passionate anger. Mrs. Hendrie was the interloper, the siren, the vampire. The thought of her pretty blue eye enraged Louise as if it were the colour of red to her bovine animosity. Inflamed with a murderous urge, she seized the

bread knife and advanced into the dining-room.

Mrs. Hendrie looked up on her entrance.

"Louise," she said, "you even anticipate our wishes. We do need some more bread cut."

Louise put the knife on the table.

"I'm leaving this afternoon, ma'am," she said.

"What!"

Louise repeated her statement.

And nothing could alter her determination and nothing could draw out her reason.

"Now what do you suppose!" exclaimed Mrs. Hendrie to her husband.

"I don't know," he said. "Maybe it was too quiet around here for her."

#### IV

LOUISE sat on one of the straight, hard chairs of the employment agency. She was reading. That morning she had purchased a new and absorbing romance. On the cover was represented a fair-haired woman, blue of eye, who lay languorously in the arms of a viking-like man, a blond hero whose golden hair curled over his head like ripples of a fresh sea touched with sunlight.

The madame of the establishment handed Louise a card with an address. Stowing the romance in a pocket concealed by the copious folds of her dress, Louise arose and walked out of the room. She took the car and got off at the proper street. She rang the bell of the required house.

The mistress of the establishment was very favourably impressed with her. Louise agreed to her terms and was shown to the kitchen.

A stack of unwashed dishes confronted her. Deftly attaching an apron to her person, she entered upon the business of cleaning up. As she worked her face betrayed no emotion . . .

In the late afternoon she exercised her admirable skill in the preparation of an excellent dinner. As she brought in the consommé in the evening, she



saw the master of the house for the first time.

He was a magnificent, blond fellow, with golden hair rippling thickly back from his white forehead. To Louise's eye he was incredibly handsome. Something stirred in her blood, and she experienced what amounted to a thrill. She stood by the table a moment, and then withdrew.

In the kitchen she remained for a motionless second, staring down at the floor. Her shoulders rose slowly, then fell; the whisper of a gust of air passing between her lips sounded in the room, she sighed. She took up a platter containing a beefsteak garnished with sweet peppers and passed through the kitchen into the dining-room. . . .



## HANDSHAKES

By Helen Woljeska

**M**Y apartment has a little square entrance hall.

This is where I stand, under the yellow-globed electric light, when bidding farewell to my callers. . . .

It is curious to notice the handshakes of the different men.

There is the matter-of-fact handshake of the casual acquaintance, it has nothing to say; and the brisk hearty one of an old friend, which tells of perfect understanding; there is the lingering one of him who finds it hard to go; and the ardent one that bespeaks an all-too-certain confidence; and the limp one that resents defeat; and—last of all—but no, *he* does not shake hands. . . .



## BELIEF

By Hortense Flexner

**I**N six gold weeks of summer  
The striped bee,  
Still eager for more roses,  
And sunny paths of clover sweetness,  
Dies,  
Believing that flowers are eternal.



**M**ANKIND is like a blind man who mistakes his visions for sight.



# COBWEBS AND STARSHINE

By E. L. Grant Watson

*Author of "Where Bonds Are Loosed," "The Mainland," etc.*

## I

AT the farthest output of the big Jedburgh sheep-station a young shepherd lived by himself. His rough humpy, built of painted Hessian and corrugated iron, was an insignificant speck amidst the large and sweeping undulations of the Australian bush. Huge wired enclosures stretched for miles on every side and vast flocks of sheep could from time to time be seen, in the far distance, feeding on the scant and stunted bushes. To the Eastward beyond the outermost wire fence was the sand desert, which, ridge behind ridge, spread far over the interior of the great continent.

For eleven months of the year the sun beats pitilessly down upon the arid soil and burns up any vestige of the green herbs, which in the twelfth month—the month of the rains—sprout so courageously from the red and dusty earth. After the first rain-fall green shoots spring up, and insect life, as if by magic, teems and fructifies in every cranny and on every grassblade. In a few days the desert is swathed in a sheet of delicate green; and then as if in desperate hurry to make the most of their short lives, white, pink and yellow flowers, with fragile dry petals, expose their faces and turn the desert to a field of snow, tinted here and there by streaks of pink and yellow. The air is filled with the sound of insects' wings and is sweet with the odour of sour honey. Then, in another week or ten days, the sun, which has called all that delicate and hopeful life into being, withers and powders it to the finest dust, so that not one dried haum is left. Noth-

ing remains but the blue-grey mulga and salt-bushes; these, with their gnarled and brittle stems, withstand the drought and so the sheep are able to feed upon their fleshy leaves.

Close by the hut a group of Salmon-gums spread their slender and sparsely-leaved branches. Under these trees were two smaller buildings. One, a shed where a horse could be tethered and the other a small hut, made of Hessian, which served as a kitchen and wash-house.

It was early summer. The last flowers were turned to dust, and the sun, with its accustomed fury, flung burning rays upon the small white buildings. Waves of heat vibrated over the surface of the earth and in the shade of the trees the shepherd stretched himself smoking his pipe. He was a pleasant-featured young man and vigorous. His fair hair looked as if it had been bleached by too long exposure to the blazing sun. Often on slack days he would ride over to "Rock Hollow," the nearest homestead, ten miles off, and talk with the farmer and his wife who lived there, but this afternoon he was lazy and was taking his ease by himself.

For more than a year had he lived on the station and had become accustomed to solitude.

At first he had been very lonely, but later he had come to like the life and had found the still expanse of the bush a consolation and even a pleasure. He loved the stretch of flat horizon, the blazing sunset skies against a purple earth, and the dark nights, thick with their numberless stars. He loved the soft breeze that stirred in the early morning and fanned to and fro the



feathery branches of the mulga bushes.

As he now sat at his ease with his back against a tree-stem he was surprised to see the distant figure of a horse-man riding towards him. He stood up and watched the dark speck get larger. No one was expected to come that way, and he wondered who the visitor could be. From time to time some prospector or sheep-buyer would stop on his way up country, and stay with him for a day or a couple of nights. On these occasions he was glad to give hospitality and receive tidings of the world. Late in the evenings he and his guest would sit up over the camp fire and talk of the life of towns, of women and business and all the memories that cluster round civilization.

While he now watched the approach of the stranger he was pleased at the prospect of companionship, for like so many men who live cut off from their fellows, he was glad to express, when occasion offered, some of those thoughts, which in times of solitude he had turned over and over in his mind. But now as he watched, he was surprised to see that the stranger was not a man but a woman. It was not often that women came that way, though he had seen two not so very long ago, and they had occupied much of his thoughts.

As the stranger drew near he walked out from under the trees to meet her. She reined up within a few paces and he saw that she was a well-built woman of about forty. He noticed a coil of dark hair touched with grey under the brim of her sun-hat.

After the first greeting he asked where she was going. She told him to Meekathana, a small town some forty miles distant and that she would spend that night at the farm at Rock Hollow.

"Then there will be time for you to stop and have some dinner with me," he said. "You'll find riding in the evening pleasanter and it won't take you more than an hour and a half to get there."

At this first encounter he found himself nervous and shy, and having got

out his speech and offered his hospitality, he became very much embarrassed.

The woman looked at him amused and rather attracted; she at once felt curious about the life of this solitary and good-looking young man. She accepted his invitation, and in the next moment had jumped down from her horse and was leading it to the shed where it could stand out of the sun.

"Would you sooner have dinner in the house?" he asked abruptly. "It's cooler here under the trees. I won't be long getting the food cooked, there is nothing but mutton and potatoes and bread and tinned butter."

"The sound of it makes me even hungrier than I am already," she laughed. "I'd much rather be out here; but let me help."

"No, no," he said quickly, "I can manage. You must be tired. Sit down under the trees. I won't be long getting you a cup of tea. The water here is not good to drink without boiling it first."

Soon he had a fire blazing and a billy of water hanging over the flames. Then from a sack, hanging on one of the trees he took the carcass of a sheep, cut off generous portions, and out of the kitchen produced a blackened frying-pan.

His guest watched with amusement all his preparations and was eager in her offers of help, but he would listen to none of them, looking upon it as part of his duty as a host to do the work. She was pleased at his independence in such matters and admired a self-sufficiency that she was not accustomed to meeting with in men. Soon he had the meal ready, and served with strong hot tea to wash it down. He learnt that his guest was a school-mistress and was on her way to visit her sister in Meekathana, and had in the last two days travelled sixty miles across open country by herself.

After a while his shyness began to wear off. He liked his guest. She had no superior airs, was easy to talk to, and seemed anxious to hear about his life—how long he had been at the station, how he spent his time and



even how old he was. He now talked freely and without hesitation.

When they had finished their meal they moved to some little distance under the trees. His companion was quick to see that he was full of ready confidences. She liked his serious, calm face.

No wonder, she thought, the poor boy wants to talk, living alone like that for all those months.

"And have you lived in this place for a whole year?" she asked. "And you're only twenty? What a shame!"

Then she laughed. "I suppose I'm the only woman that you've seen since you've been here?"

"No," he said, "curiously enough, only a month ago two ladies were here. They were riding, but going another way. They arrived one afternoon and I gave them a night's lodging before they went on the next morning." He added inconsequently. "They were both young. Girls both of them."

"What, have you room in your house to put people up?"

"Oh, yes. Chaps often stay here going one way or another."

"But these were in first women you had seen."

"Yes."

She looked at him with eyes quick to find out any secret, and asked kindly,

"What were they like?"

She was amused and delighted to see the deep blush that spread under the tan of his face. Indeed, she thought, he is a charming young man. He almost gulped at his answer.

"They were very nice, one of them was beautiful."

Then speaking quickly and nervously, he plunged into his story.

"They came here one afternoon while I was out. You see they were too tired to go on. When I came back in the evening I found them looking at my pans and trying to get their own dinner ready. They didn't know much how to handle things, I soon put a stop to that. I did the best I could for them, but there was nothing much here—just what you had to-day. But they didn't

seem to mind. They praised me for my cooking and made little jokes about it. Afterwards we sat under the trees and watched the evening sky grow darker and darker. A wonderful sunset it was. It was springtime, the everlastings were out with their little crisp blossoms. So too was the wattle, the air was sweet with its scent. The ground was white with the spring flowers which rustled their papery petals as one walked. A real bush evening! Neither of the girls seemed to want to talk much, and I couldn't either. I remember just as the sun was level and dipping under the earth, one of the girls, the lovely one, took off her hat and the light struck on her hair making it shine like gold.

He looked up at his companion who listened so silently and saw that she too had taken off her hat. Her hair was more grey than he had at first noticed.

"Then later when it got dark," he went on, "I think we all somehow felt uncomfortable. I had so much that I wanted to say (he looked at his companion and laughed at the confession) about the sunset, and how glad I was that they were staying with me. But there were no words I could speak; anything would have sounded stupid. Do you understand how it was?"

She smiled kindly at his naïvete. Youth—of what a delicate texture it was made! It hurt her to feel how old she must seem to him.

"Yes, I understand," she said, "tell me about it."

"It was a wonderful night, the earth white in the foreground and deep purple in the distance against the orange sky. Later everything became grey except the flowers near at hand, and they seemed to shine with a light of their own. It was cool then, after the heat of the day, and I felt as if I could be contented to sit there for always and never move. Yet somehow I grudged every minute as it passed. For a time we tried to talk and then gave it up and just sat still, without speaking. It must have been ever so late when I



at last told them that they had better turn in. I remember how white their faces looked by the candle light. I said good-night. They said good-night and thanked me, and smiled and then went in together.

"Then I went into my room and as I shut the door I felt as if I had been a most awful fool. In a flash I thought of all the things I might have talked about. They had expected me to say something and must have thought me as big a fool as I felt myself to be.

"Through the partition, its only a thin one between the two rooms, I could hear all their movements. I stood still listening. I somehow never thought of going to bed. You see," he looked up, embarrassed, "I hadn't seen anyone for so long a time—at least, I mean any woman. I went across to my bed and lay down on my back with all my clothes on and listened. In the next room I could hear them moving about, whispering to one another; and now and then one of them would give a little laugh. How I wished I knew what they were talking of. Then I heard them brushing their hair—that wonderful hair that had shone in the sunlight! Then I thought: well, at any rate it won't last long, they'll be in bed soon and then there'll be quiet. . . ."

He broke off and said as if in explanation,

"You think it strange my saying all this stuff. But do you know I'm glad to—it's been on my mind somehow—I found then that I couldn't stand it. My thoughts kept turning back on themselves. I jumped up and went out as quickly as I could. I ran from the house and flung myself down, under the trees out here.

It was a moonless night clear as always with any number of stars. I looked up through the branches, their thin pointed leaves made a pattern against the sky, and among them the stars shone. The earth and all the night seemed wonderfully alive, but I kept my eyes fixed on the stars and didn't let my thoughts go back to the house. I don't know how long I lay there

looking up at that black tracery of leaves, but after a while it seemed as if the sky and the tree-tops were spinning away from me, or rather that I together with them, was motionless, and that the earth was falling.

"I thought of the great distances between the stars and of the smallness of myself. It was then that the mice began to play in the leaves near my head, and I remembered where I was. Around me I could hear all the sounds of the bush. I lay still for some time listening, and then after a while I went to sleep. I woke up very early in the morning, at the first dawn. I was just a little cold. I went in and fetched a blanket and lay still till the sun rose. Then I got up and made breakfast ready and rapped hard on the door where the two girls were sleeping. The sun was well up by the time they came out, and the heat was already rising in waves across the flats. After breakfast they thanked me ever so kindly for what I'd done for them, and rode on. They said they would come and see me again, but I expect they will forget."

He ceased speaking and his companion waited for a moment to see whether he would not add anything else. Then she said:

"And you are content to stay here and wait?"

"It's only for a time," he answered.

"I shall be moved into some other station, and there's much about this life that I like. I don't feel lonely, as a rule, but now and then I'm glad to talk."

Again his companion was silent. Then she asked:

"Do you never think of getting married?"

"Oh, yes, indeed I do. That's just what I want. A wife, out in a place like this—that would be all right; but women want to live in towns as a rule."

"All women don't. But tell me," she went on quickly. "What sort of a wife will you marry?" Then changing her tone and laughing. "What qualifications must she have? I expect you have them all thought out."



He answered slowly.

"No, I don't know that I have. I don't know much about women," he said gravely.

She smiled at so obvious a truth. "But you, who must know more of them. What qualities would you look for?"

Pleased, and yet a little thoughtful at the question, she paused for a moment and then said,

"First I would see how much the girl could use her hands—usefully, and notice the way she used them. See how she handled dishes and brooms and needles. Then I would try and get a look at her mother. See what sort of a woman she was and how she kept her home."

"That's a good idea," he admitted. "I'd never thought of that."

"Now tell me what you'd look for?"

"Well, I suppose it *would* be partly the way she moved her hands, though I hadn't thought of the needles and all that. Oh! it's difficult to say all the things I look for; but the colour of her hair and eyes and complexion and the shape of her neck and head, and then age would count. She'd have to be young."

"Yes, those points I suppose are important, but try and remember the others too." She smiled and then added,

"If you find any girl as young as

yourself you'll be lucky. I could almost believe you ought still to have a mother to look after you."

He blushed hotly.

"There, I didn't mean to be rude. Forgive me. But men do have to be looked after by women, either a mother or a wife."

"It's I will look after my wife," he said, and no mistake about that."

"You're very daring," she answered, and for a moment looked him straight in the eyes. Then breaking off, "But how late it is, the sun is setting. I must get on with my journey. You've managed for me ever so nicely and given me a delicious dinner. But I must go now if I'm not to be very late at Rock-Hollow."

When she had mounted her horse she turned and held out her hand. "Good-bye, I so much enjoyed our talk. I wish you all happiness. I'm sure you deserve it."

"Good-bye, I hope you'll come back this way again. I do hope so."

"No, I don't think I will. It's good-bye for good."

As she cantered away over the red dusty soil, the setting sun cast long purple shadows and the sky was bright with a rose-pink glow.

"Yes, he's a dear boy," she thought to herself. "But what a baby! What a treasure! Yes, indeed!—but that's all cobwebs and starshine!"



A MAN'S admiration for his wife's charms goes up proportionally as he visualizes their effect on another man.



A MAN'S idea of complete homage to his present sweetheart is to shamelessly run down his former one.





# I LOVE MY HUSBAND

By Ruth Canfield

I LOVE my husband. When he comes home from the club, breathing loudly to himself, smelling of Scotch, with chalk from a billiard cue on the sleeve of his coat. . . . He explains so calmly that he has had to entertain a "customer from out West."

I love my husband. When he comes home from the theater, humming a melody from a new musical comedy, a forgotten programme sticking in his coat pocket . . . he explains so fluently about the business banquet he attended.

I love my husband. When he comes home smelling of Mary Garden perfume, wearing a guilty expression, and with rice-powder on his shoulder . . . he explains so glibly about his evening with the boys at the club.

I love my husband. He is so amusing.



# SHACKLES

By David Morton

IF one should cast his lute away  
And close his eyes to dawn,  
And fleeing from the stars, should say:  
"Beauty and Song, be gone!

"For you have haunted all my days  
With blowing shapes and snares:  
No more I'll follow lovely ways,  
Or capture tuneful airs."

So would he make a song that day,  
Of all he had foregone:—  
If one should cast his lute away  
And close his eyes to dawn.





# EVA DUVEEN

By Thyra Samter Winslow

## I

SHE must get something today. It was the first thing she thought of as she waked up. It was the first thing she had thought of as she waked up every day for the past month. Now it was the middle of September. She must get something today.

Eva Duveen raised up on one thin elbow and looked at the nicked alarm clock on the dresser. It was ten minutes of nine. She got out of bed and went to the window. The window was hung with a soiled white net curtain. She pulled the curtain aside and looked out. In the factory just across the street the machines were already busy. The four girls she always saw when she looked out were bending over their work, sewing, sewing, sewing. She couldn't stand that! Better be dead than spending the days like that, bent over a sewing machine in a factory. Not that she was so much better off, herself. Still—

She shut the window. It was unbearably hot, but at least she could keep out some of the noise.

She took her cheap mirror from the dresser. The handle had been cut off so that it would fit better into her make-up box. She walked over to the window again and examined her face.

There was no use trying to keep it away from herself. There were wrinkles. Last year those around her eyes had begun to show. Those on her forehead had been there for years, but didn't count because she could cover them with her hair. But, around her mouth—those hadn't been there last year. Not that large, anyhow. There

were two, quite deep, from the corners of her mouth to her nose.

Worse than that, when she bent her head, her cheeks formed a whole row of wrinkles, made a caricature of herself. Her skin was pale and coarse and criss-crossed by fine lines, caused by hundreds of hurried applications and removals of cheap creams and grease paints. No wonder she hadn't found anything.

She put the mirror down with a little bang. Had she cracked it? She picked it up gingerly. It was not cracked. She shivered at the possibility.

She took off her faded pink cotton crêpe nightgown and, filling the basin in the corner, she washed as well as she could, letting the water drip onto the faded red carpet. She dried herself with the cleanest of the three towels—her landlady gave her only three a week, and she had to keep one of the three for cold cream. Sitting on the bed, she put on the same stockings she had worn the day before, the only whole pair she owned, the top and feet parts of cheap cotton, the rest of sleazy silk. She put a little cold cream on a dirty handkerchief and rubbed it on her high-heeled, patent leather pumps, until they looked almost as if they had been shined. She knew the dust would stick to them more than ever, but she could rub them off on her stockings before going in to see anyone.

She paused, then, for a moment and sprinkled talcum powder on her arms and neck. How thin her throat was getting! The bones seemed to protrude more than ever. She fanned herself with the last night's *Evening Jour-*



*nal*. It was hot. She hated this room with its one rear window and its factory view, the cheap dresser, the rickety square table, piled with a miscellany of paper and clothes. Was this a place to live in? If she could get something, she could move. Not that the other places would be better. They'd be a change, anyhow.

She put on her cheap, lace-trimmed lingerie and adjusted the faded ribbons. Her corsets seemed even looser than usual. She mustn't get any thinner.

She cold-creamed her face, removing the cream with the used towel, powdered liberally and added generous quantities of rouge, of blue and black eyebrow pencils and of lip-stick. Eva knew that her make-up would stand out in the strong sunlight. She knew that even in a day of much rouging she would be conspicuous, but she knew how sunken her cheeks were, how thin her eyelashes. She did not dare omit anything. She arranged her thin, uneven blonde hair into the semblance of a stylish coiffure, holding it in place with numberless "invisible" hairpins of a bright bronze color.

Listlessly, then, she straightened the things on the dresser—three professional photographs, one of The Elanos, signed "Fondly yours, Effie Elano," one of a girl draped in a wisp of chiffon, signed, "To my little pal, from Myrta Jackson," one of a man with a typical, lined, strained actor's face, its signature, "With best regards, Harold W. Torrens"—and cheap toilet things of light blue celluloid and a half-empty bottle of lilac toilet water.

This wouldn't do. She put on her waist of flesh-colored Georgette crêpe, fairly fresh except just at the collar, and her tan suit, putting the collar of the waist on the outside of the coat and leaving the coat open. She had bought the suit two months before, when she first got to New York, at a little shop on Broadway that had three prices. At least they had quoted three to Eva on the suit, but she often wondered if they wouldn't have come down to a fourth

price if she had hesitated. She had paid \$21.50, but she liked the suit and felt that it had a smart cut to it. She adjusted her hat, small, tight-fitting and black, with an exaggerated black quill curled out at the side. She felt that she looked rather well.

She went out, then, down the three flights of narrow, linoleum-covered stairs. The rooming house was in West Eighth Street. Eva took the Sixth Avenue "L" and got off at the Forty-second Street Station. She went into the Automat across from Bryant Park, changed a quarter into nickels and got a five-cent sandwich and a cup of coffee. The other fifteen cents would be enough for lunch and she'd use another quarter for supper and car fare home. There was little enough money left.

She drank her coffee slowly, then dipped her napkin into a glass of water and rubbed her mouth and her fingers. She opened her purse and retouched her lips with her lip-stick and adjusted her hat a bit more fetchingly to one side, repowdered her nose. She was ready!

## II

HER first stop was at a booking agent's in Forty-second Street, a walk of only about a block. She knew it was almost hopeless. She had been there so many times already. The dirty-looking, bare office, the walls hung with theatrical "paper" and a few professional pictures, was divided by a railing, on one side of which sat an office boy, and on the other the row of chairs against the wall was half-filled with the usual types of out-of-work theatrical people. There was a middle-aged, rather fat woman, two young, cheaply dressed girls, a large, black-haired man chewing on a toothpick, a young fellow with yellowed teeth. Eva did not know any of them.

"May I see Mr. Stuart?" she asked the boy.

He looked at her carelessly.

"Got appointment?"



"No; but I saw him about a week ago and he told me to come back."

"What's the name?"

"Eva Duveen. It—it was about a small part or a place in the chorus. He thought maybe a stock company—"

The boy slouched out of his chair. He'd do his part, anyhow. He disappeared inside a door marked "private," reappeared in half a minute.

"He said there was nothing. Come back in a week or two."

Eva went out. There was no use waiting and insisting on seeing Stuart. She had spent several long days of waiting before. It never occurred to Eva that the agents made their living by getting positions for people. To her the agents were gods, granting favors to a gifted few. In other years, somehow, by the middle of September—

She was out on Broadway again. The sun was hotter. The streets, the board walks, the pavements, were all alike, grey. Broadway, with its signs, its unlit lights, its cheap shops, looked like a side show of a circus on a day when there is no performance. There was no attempt to keep up the hoop-la, the dazzle that existed at night. Everything was tawdry, a fake exposed. It was as if a juggler had taken off his glittering coat of red and gold and was spending the time in his shirt sleeves, waiting. Eva breathed deeply of the hot, dusty air. She would have liked to have taken her coat off, but she knew she looked more stylish with it on. All winter on the road she looked forward to this—getting back to town, to Broadway. Well, here she was. And jobless.

She went next to an office in Thirtieth Street. The same crowd was here, as if they had been magically transferred, save that the large man had a fierce mustache and chewed gum instead of a toothpick. There was a girl in charge instead of a boy. The conversation was almost exactly the same.

Walking up Broadway again, Eva admitted she hadn't expected anything else at these places. These weren't

her best chances, of course. Only she had thought maybe she could get a part. She'd go over to the Crescent Theatre now.

She met a girl who had been in a company with her. She had never liked the girl, yet now they greeted each other with a half-hysterical show of friendship, talked of nothing for a minute or two and parted as quickly as they could. How old and worn Trixie was looking. Eva felt she couldn't be looking as badly as that.

The Crescent Theatre was in Forty-fifth Street. It was a small theatre that always housed a successful musical comedy, and the managers always had several shows on the road. Twice Eva had been out with their shows. She wouldn't admit that now they would have nothing for her. Of course, it is best to be sent by a booking-office. Still, if there was an opening, an old girl of theirs, as she was—

She walked down Forty-fifth Street, into the theatre, up to the manager's office on the second floor. A boy, sweeping, did not interrupt her. In the outer office a stenographer was writing, a boy of about fourteen was clipping theatrical papers.

Eva spoke to the girl.

"I'd like to see Mr. Levis, please."

She had been there three times before, but had never seen him.

"Name, please."

"Eva Duveen. I was with The Golden Butterfly company on the road, two years ago."

She knew Levis didn't remember her name.

"Sit down. I'll see if he can see you."

Eva sat down on the edge of a chair, looked at the filing cabinets, the business-like desk, the framed pictures of stars. If only she had real business here—if she had come in to sign a contract!

"Mr. Levis said come right in."

The girl surprised her. Eva hurried to her feet, pushed a wisp of hair under her hat and went into the private office.



"Yes?" said the man seated at the desk inside.

He was a round, well-fed fellow, with black shining hair and a spotted vest. His face was severe but not unkind.

Eva Duveen stood awkwardly before him, her black patent-leather purse held tightly in her hand.

"I—I wondered if—if you had anything for me. I was with your 'Golden Butterfly' all season two years ago. I just got in—I mean I closed a few—few—weeks ago with 'The Flyaway Girl.' I'd like to get something right away if I could."

"Who sent you here?"

"No one. I just thought, because I was with your shows before. I'm a pretty good dancer. I did a feature dance in 'Old Mother Hubbard.' I've had pretty good parts. I nearly always have lines. I've never jumped a show."

She talked eagerly, quickly, hoping to convince Levis of her worthiness, trying to ignore the look in his eyes.

Levis had looked her over quickly, lost interest. Had he seen her wrinkles, her cheapness, in that one glance?

"I'm sorry, Miss—er—oh, yes, thank you, Duveen, but we're not putting out much this year. You know what a bad year last year was. This year will be worse. And the things we are putting on now, little intimate shows, using half a dozen girls, you know, débutante type, no dancing at all, just a little singing. I'm sorry. I'll keep you in mind—if anything turns up."

He spoke with real kindness in his voice. He hated things like this. He'd have to tell his stenographer to be more careful about whom she let in.

"Thank you," said Eva Duveen, embarrassed by his kindness. "Thank you," she repeated, and went out.

Had he seen that she was just about finished or was it the truth, that he wasn't using many girls? She could dance pretty well, and, made up, her wrinkles didn't show—much—from the front. She couldn't tell him that. She was rather thin.

Another booking agent. Here she

saw a man she knew, Bert Bryant, who had had a small comedy bit in a show with her once. He greeted her with aloof friendliness. He could tell she was out of work and didn't have much money, in spite of her tan suit and the new waist. Bert was not one to make intimacies needlessly.

"How's the girl?" asked Bert. "What's the good word?"

"Just got back off the road," she said, and then remembered she had passed him on Sixth Avenue over a month before. It never occurred to her until later that he, too, was out of work and probably as badly off as she.

"Had a good year?"

"Nothing to complain of. It's good to be back in town, isn't it?" Eva smiled as brightly as she could.

"You bet. I just closed with the Alvon Four. We had six weeks' time right here in New York. I'm turning down all the small-time stuff on the road, though. This is going to be a bad year, and if I can't find something big, I'm going to float around town and work the cabarets. At least you know where you are. Ever think of it?"

"Oh, yes," Eva smiled again. How many times she had thought of it—but with no results. Her voice never had been good.

"You see," she said, "I'm looking for stock or chorus work where I can have a part or some good lines. I was just up to see Levis, and he was telling me about a road show he was going to put out soon—one of those little intimate things that just use a few girls. I was with a Levis show a couple of years ago. I thought, though, if there was something here. You can't be too sure, you know."

She passed him and went to the boy behind the railing.

"You'll have to wait your turn," he said.

There were eight or nine ahead. Eva sat down for a while and tried to be patient. What was the use of waiting?

She went out.

"So long, girl, best of luck," Bert



Bryant called to her as she passed him. She could feel the condescension in his voice.

She walked up Broadway again. She must find something, right away, now, today. She couldn't keep on like this.

### III

EIGHT years of it—and here she was—out of work, useless, wrinkled. Oh, well, no use crying over it now.

She had never thought that she would be like this. Why, she was going to do great things. At least, once she had thought so. She remembered her first show. She had run away from Snowdon, Nebraska, to join it. Snowdon wasn't such a bad town, now that she thought of it. She had rather looked forward to playing Snowdon some day—or to go back there—famous—"Former Snowdon girl, now well-known Broadway star, returns to Snowdon for a visit."

How often she had imagined that headline in the *Snowdon Gazette*. And now—

Snowdon had been awfully slow. She remembered how bored she always was with the people there. She had been the prettiest girl in Snowdon then, though. Lots of people had told her, Why, there never was a drummer who came to Snowdon who didn't tell her she was too good for the town.

Only eight years ago! Was she only twenty-seven? Nobody would believe it. Then her hair had been blonde—real blonde—and fluffy, and her cheeks had been round and fat. She had been nineteen when she left Snowdon to join the Marshall Company. She remembered that yet. The chorus had seemed fun, that year, even the long jumps and the cold dressing-rooms. It had all seemed part of a big game that was going to lead to a big success. Even missing a meal just meant that one of the company would get out at a station and buy crackers and cheese and bananas, and they'd spread the things on the red velvet coach seats and have a picnic. And then she had come

to New York. She had been pretty then. They didn't let her stand around in anterooms or turn her down. Well, that was a long time ago.

Eva remembered, suddenly, that she hadn't had much breakfast. It must be about time for lunch. She walked to a Childs' restaurant, a block away, and ordered a plate of beans and a glass of milk. How close it was—and noisy. She finished quickly and paid her check.

She'd see now what Frenyear had. She was glad there were a lot of booking agents. Eva had always been glad because she didn't need to go to Frenyear. Years ago she wouldn't have dreamed of going. Frenyear dealt in lower class attractions. She had hoped now for something a little better—still—

The Frenyear office, in Forty-seventh Street, was smaller and fewer people were here, mostly chorus girls. They were cheap types, the kind that go out on the smaller road shows, girls from the slums, small-town girls in home-made hats. Eva felt that her own suit and waist had style, even if she wasn't so very young.

Eva was ashamed of being at Frenyear's. Still, she must get a job. If he had a good road show, now, not a first-class show, but something fairly good—she must get something today—

A young man, in his shirt sleeves, smoking a cigarette, was at a desk.

"I want to speak to Mr. Frenyear," she said.

In this office some of her old-time nonchalance came back. Here was the one place she felt superior.

"I'll tell him. You've had experience?"

Eva laughed.

"I've been with 'The Show of the Year' at the Cosmopolitan and a Levis show—four years of experience."

She tossed her head. Experience, indeed! She wouldn't say more than four years, though. More than that...

The young man went to a door, opened it, called in something, turned his head.

"Come on in."



There were three men in the room, all in their shirt sleeves, all smoking. Two had their hats on, tilted a little.

"You wanted a position, I believe," said one of them, a sallow fellow of about forty.

"Yes, a part or—or in the chorus." Eva tried to be haughty, but the stares of the three kept down some of her hauteur.

"You were at the *Cosmopolitan*, you said?"

"Yes, I was there a whole season, in the chorus."

"Several years ago, perhaps." Eva heard the sneer under the words. She grew cold.

"Yes, about four years ago, I think it was. I was with 'The Traders,' the year after that, and then 'The Golden Butterfly.' I just closed with 'The Fly-away Girl.' I can dance well. Perhaps you've heard of me. I'm Eva Duveen."

He shook his head. Then,

"Well, I've got one thing—take it or leave it. Rehearsals started yesterday with Gus Muddle's show. They need another dancer. Want to go up there?" He took out a card and held a pencil over it.

"Gus Muddle? You don't mean 'The Dancing Dolls'? You don't—"

"The very same. What's the matter? Never tried burlesque?"

"Why, no, I've—I've always been with first-class shows, I—" Eva remembered the last two years—the shows hadn't been first class. Still, this!

"It's one of the best shows on the wheel, nice people to work for. Shows are scarce this year. If you're a *good* dancer, you *may* do. Take it or leave it."

"May I—let you know in a little while?" Eva had tried hard to decline with a haughty toss of her head, but she couldn't.

"Can't promise it'll still be here." He called out of the door,

"Say, Sam."

The young man at the desk came in.

"If this young lady comes back, give

her this card to Gus Muddle, will you?" Then, to Eva,

"I guess you'll be back all right," he smiled and sneered.

As she turned to go, he called,

"They're rehearsing a new show at the *Cosmopolitan*. If you don't like Gus Muddle's show, you might ask them to put you in 'The Show of the Year' again." The other two men laughed at this. Then,

"Goo-bye, the boy'll give you the card when you come back."

"When I come back," thought Eva as she hurried out still icy. So—this was what she got—her first chance this year—burlesque. Was she as badly off as that? Two shows a day, coarse surroundings, impossible people, insults—must she go—take it—if only . . .

"The Show of the Year"! She had been in that six years ago, her third year in the business. That had been a year! She remembered now the ecstasy of playing New York. Even then, though, she had grumbled at extra rehearsals, grumbled when other girls got bigger salaries. She remembered the little costumes, dainty, always clean and mended, the long, well-lighted dressing-room with its rows of tables, its saucy girls. That had been wonderful. And the next year she had preferred a little part on the road and the year after that there were so many new girls she couldn't get into a city show and had had to take a road show again. And now—Gus Muddle.

#### IV

THE *Cosmopolitan* was only a block away. She'd go in there, just for fun, and watch them rehearse. Although she knew it was out of all reason, way down, something told her that maybe there would be something—someone would remember her and make room—a year in New York . . .

Hardly knowing she did it, she crossed Broadway and hurried over to the *Cosmopolitan* and around to the stage door. She pushed open the heavy door as she had done so many



times. A man at the door glanced at her, let her pass, she was inside.

It was just as she remembered it, the huge "set" pushed back, the immense stage. Groups of people were standing about, talking. A big man, close to the footlights, was explaining something, gesticulating dramatically, to a group of five or six. No one was in practice clothes. Rehearsals were evidently just beginning.

Eva went a little closer to one of the groups. So these were the new chorus girls, the kind "The Show of the Year" was using now. She was surprised at their youth. They seemed so much younger than she remembered them—though she had only been twenty-one when she played with the Cosmopolitan show. How could they be so young and so beautiful? They had a kind of creamy, round beauty that horrified Eva as she looked at them. She had forgotten that girls could be—like that. Some of them were in cool, crisp summer dresses, others in suits. They had on Georgette crêpe waists, too. Not like hers. Hers was soiled around the neck, flimsy. Theirs were fresh, floating, displaying rounded arms and soft, powdery necks. How wonderfully groomed they were, from their perky little hats to their sleek heels! They had on rouge and powder but it seemed a part of their smooth young skins.

Suddenly, standing there, Eva felt older than she had ever felt before, as if she belonged to another age, another existence. She seemed definitely second-hand, second-class, immensely inferior. And yet, there had been a time when she, too, was cool and blonde and fresh and impudent-looking; when she, too, could pose and toss her head and talk with an imitative English accent. How well she knew all of the little tricks, the high laugh, the smart pose. How well she had been able to do all of them—one time.

She felt, almost, as if she were invisible, as if it would be a sort of shame if the girls saw her. She drew closer into the shadow of a piece of scenery.

Another girl came in. She was like the group she joined and yet about her there was something even more exquisite. She seemed a bit cooler, a bit more fragile, aloof. Her blonde beauty seemed more artificial, more china-like. She wore white, trimmed in tiny strapings of ribbon, the sort of frock a half-hour's walk on Broadway in the heat would crumple into grey. Her little white shoes had not touched much of the sidewalk. She held a gold mesh bag in one hand, the other touched the violets at her waist.

Eva moved away a little. She knew that she could never ask for a place in "The Show of the Year." If she could only get out without being seen, laughed at!

She hurried to the door. Someone in her path. She looked up.

"Why, hello, Jerry," she said.

"Well, if it ain't Eva Duveen," said the voice heartily.

The voice belonged to Jerry Bray, assistant property man of the Cosmopolitan. Each summer Eva met Jerry a couple of times at cheap table d'hôte restaurants or on the street. They always stopped for a chat. The last few years she had even allowed him to take her places, "treat" her, occasionally. Jerry was a sandy little fellow, with extraordinarily broad shoulders. He was past forty and yet he had the mannerisms of a young boy and everyone treated him as if he were very young. He was a sort of a joke around the Cosmopolitan. Everyone was always teasing everyone else about Jerry and blaming him for things and sending him on errands. Yet everyone was kind enough to him.

"What you doing here, Eva?" asked Jerry.

Eva didn't dare tell the truth, say why she had come in. She waited a minute, unconsciously taking the impudent pose of a "Show of the Year" girl.

"Oh, just happened to be in the neighborhood and thought I'd drop in and look around."

"Where you playing?"



"Resting, just now. Guess I'll go out in a few weeks. I'm considering several things. Ever see anything of the old bunch?"

They talked a little while then, of friends who had been in the show six years ago, of other acquaintances. Some had risen, some were playing "small time," a few were dead, most of them had disappeared into the usual oblivion of People We Used to Know.

Then suddenly, Jerry,

"Married yet, Eva?"

"No, still happy, thank you."

Jerry stood on one foot, took a cigar out of his pocket and moistened the end of it. Then,

"Say, Eva, what about you and me tying up? Kind of sudden, but you've known me for a long time and I—I'd kind of like to have a home. You know—marriage—the real thing. Used to live with my mother—in Harlem—nice little flat, steam heat and everything. She died last year and one of the boys and I been batching it and, say, Eva, the road ain't none too good now and you don't look none too well. You know, I been liking you ever since that year you were on here. What do you say?"

Eva listened unbelievably. Here she was, letting Jerry Bray ask her to marry him! Jerry Bray! Why, six years ago, Jerry Bray wouldn't have dared walk down the street with her—any more than he would have dared walk down the street with those girls over there on the stage now. But each time she saw Jerry he must have seen the change, seen that she was approaching the place where he dared . . . When she was here at the Cosmopolitan he had told her she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen and she had smiled graciously and laughed about it later. Since then many times she had been amused at his "attentions," the tickets to shows and occasional meals, the last years. Now—he had proposed to her! In spite of the many matrimonial chances that are supposed to come—romantically—to those who "tread the board," Eva knew that

this was only her third real proposal—Gilbert first, then a traveling man for a hat firm, and now—Jerry. Oh, well.

Jerry had been going on with his monologue. Eva had heard part of it. She tried to listen.

"You know me, kid, I'm right there. I got a good job, good and steady, and the girls around here slip me a little something once in a while for doing little favors for them—you know how that is. The flat ain't so bad—got a fine set of furniture, a three-piece parlor set. Got it just before my mother died. You could fix it up swell. And say—"

Eva smiled. A Harlem flat and Jerry Bray! Wouldn't the girls she knew—used to know—laugh at that! Still, wasn't that better than—

She wanted time to think—anything—she couldn't accept and yet . . .

She changed the subject.

"Who's the girl that just came in, the little blonde in white. Her face looks familiar."

"In white? Oh, yes, that's Teddy Arnold. You never saw her, did you? Maybe her pictures. Last year was her first year. Some doll, eh? She's Harkheimer's girl. He still can pick 'em."

Someone called to Jerry. He started away with his funny, hurried walk with a limp in it.

"Wait a minute, Eva," he called, "I'll be right back. Think over what I said."

Over her purse, Eva pressed her hands together until they hurt her. Harkheimer's girl—the girl in white! And she—she started to laugh, very low—she had spent nights, nights, wondering whether she ought to—whether it would be right—whether—and, in the end, she had refused—she, Eva Duveen—worn out, ugly, wrinkled—had, six years ago, refused to be Harkheimer's girl.

She remembered all of it, the flowers he had sent, the talks in the wings, his fat, soft, red hands, the dinners together, the suppers after the show, when he had laughed, heavily, at everything she said. He had offered her so



many things—the things this girl had now—and she had refused.

Quite dully, Eva wondered why she had refused—how she could have refused. If she had accepted, she wouldn't be Harkheimer's girl any more, now, of course—but—would it have come to worse than this? Now, even on the street, she knew that no man would even turn around to look at her. Nobody wanted her now, at all. And yet, once, she . . .

Jerry was back.

"Well, don't take it so hard. Look as though you've seen a ghost."

"Maybe I have," said Eva, and tried to laugh.

"Too much heat," said Jerry.

"Wonder you ain't dead, walking around trying to get a job on a day like this. Middle of September and you'd think it was August first. And they're planning to open up here the middle of October. Hope it's cooler by then. Say, Eva, what about it? Want to tie up with me? Do I need a recommend?"

Eva knew she couldn't marry Jerry. It was a simple way out of things, out of difficulties, out of worry, out of everything. But she couldn't do it—she — Eva Duveen — who — once — wouldn't be Harkheimer's girl. There were some things . . .

She put her hand on Jerry's shoulder, much as she would have done six years ago, in the old friendliness when she was a "Broadway favorite," with the press agent slipping her pictures to the newspapers, and Jerry was a funny little man, always good for a joke.

"Mighty good of you, Jerry, old fellow," she said, "but somehow too many years on the road has knocked matrimony and settling down quite out of me. I'm afraid. You're—I do appreciate it, Jerry, but there are a lot of other girls, you know. Good luck to you," and she put out her hand.

"Good-bye, Eva," said Jerry, rather solemnly, as she went out of the stage door.

## V

Eva walked down Broadway now. Her feet hurt dreadfully. She could feel the hot pavements through the thin soles. Her shirtwaist clung to her neck and arms. She paused in front of one of the theaters—then drew back. Why had she stopped here?

For there—where she couldn't help seeing it—was the new "paper" of a new Broadway show, featuring Gilbert Willis, whom she had just thought of—and pictures of him, too. Gilbert Willis, who had wanted to marry her!

Wouldn't he laugh, now, Gilbert? He always was the sarcastic one. This would just fit nicely into one of his little jokes. Five years ago—she had turned down Gilbert Willis. It was a joke, wasn't it?

They had been with "The Traders." She had been in the chorus and had had a little part—rather good lines—and Gilbert had been in the chorus, too. The vast chasm between chorus girls and chorus men seemed foolish now. It wasn't foolish then. Why, it was awful, if you dared talk to a chorus man. And Gilbert Willis had been really the most impossible of them all. For, in addition to being a chorus man, he had added to that the indignity of "helping with the trays." That meant he distributed and collected trays for the wardrobe trunks, after the girls had packed their clothes into them, on the nights the show left town and each girl paid him fifty cents a week for it.

Gilbert Willis, slim, brown-haired, sarcastic, a bit stupid, had risen out of the chorus. Now, six years later, he was being featured on Broadway. But, when Eva had refused him, he had been a chorus man. It was Eva, those days, who had ideas of being featured on Broadway. She hadn't wanted to marry—especially someone who would hold her back—like Gilbert. Wouldn't he laugh if he could see her? He mightn't admit he had proposed, but he would laugh just the same. And she . . .

Eva hurried away. She was almost



afraid to stare any longer at his picture, at his thin, rather hard face, his uplifted eyebrows.

She stopped in the drug store at Forty-third Street and bought some cold cream and had an orange phosphate. She was glad the price of it hadn't gone up to ten cents. My, but her throat was dry.

She remembered, then, two agencies in Forty-fifth Street that she hadn't visited lately. She went to both of them, dragging her feet a bit. There was nothing for her at either one.

Then, to a department store near Forty-second Street, where, in the Ladies' Room, she freshened up a bit, taking off her warm coat, shaking the folds out of the Georgette waist. She sat down in a hot, black leather chair and tried to think things over, decide things.

There wasn't much to decide. What was there? Her money was practically gone—a dollar or two. It had taken her all winter to save it. If she had a job, now, she could draw enough to live on, after the first week of rehearsal and they saw she was going to make good. Then she could get things she had to get before the show went on the road. She certainly needed things. Her heavy coat could do for another year. That was all. But, without a job—what was there to decide? She couldn't marry Jerry. That was settled. There wasn't anyone else—like Harkheimer—now. She couldn't find anyone. New York was too full of pretty girls, young girls with round cheeks, even to think of anything—if she had a job . . .

She had heard about Harper putting on a new road show. She had forgotten to see him about it—still—she knew the answer—an interview, humiliation—

Gus Muddle. It didn't seem so impossible now. There were worse things in the world than burli-que shows. Yes, there were, no job at all, for instance, and no looks—oh, why had she been the little blonde type that fades early

—and no ability at any other kind of work? At least in a burli-que show, a good show like Gus Muddle's, you got your money every week. And, at that, it was quite likely the company wasn't any worse than the last ones she had been with. Two shows a day—what difference did it make? Only one jump a week and usually that would be a sleeper jump—lots better than one-night stands.

The Ladies' Room maid moved around with a sudden show of energy. Everyone got up. It was time for the store to close.

Eva hurried out with a little pang of fear. Maybe—Frenyear—maybe the opening in Gus Muddle's show—maybe even that was gone.

She hurried back to Frenyear's, forgetting how badly her feet had hurt.

The office was not closed. The young man was still at the desk, still reading theatrical papers. He glanced up idly.

"I've come—about the card from Mr. Frenyear—to—to the Gus Muddle show," she said.

"Oh, yes, thought you'd be back." The young man took his feet down from a convenient chair, moved ever so little, opened a desk drawer, took out a card.

"Say," he said, "we've sent three other girls over there this afternoon. Two of them ain't had any experience, though, so maybe you'll have a chance. Be over at Wellington Hall, on Sixth Avenue, tomorrow morning at ten prompt."

He straightened his tie.

"You might say Frenyear's got you jobs before," he added, kindly, and then, "Report right away if you get this one."

Eva nodded and took the car. Oh, Frenyear'd get his commission all right, he needn't be afraid of that.

She ate dinner at a lunchroom in Sixth Avenue. Nothing on the menu was quite cold or quite cheap enough. She ordered a stew because she thought it was nourishing. She ate it as slowly as she could.



My, how tired she was! If she only knew somebody in town! If someone would only ask her to go some place pleasant, any place!

She went out on the street again and walked slowly. A man eyed her sharply as she passed. She guessed he was a plain-clothes man and hurried on. She felt a bit indignant.

Eva went back to Broadway again. She stopped in a drug store and had an ice cream, for dessert, spending as much time as she could over it. On the street again she wasted another half hour. Maybe she could see a show. There were several she hadn't tried to see. That would pass the time.

At a Broadway theater she approached the box office handing in her professional card, slightly brown and bent at the corners.

"Nothing doing," the pert young man at the window snapped at her. She was only a little hurt. She had been turned down before. If she could find a show that wasn't doing any business, she knew they'd be glad to welcome her.

She tried the box office at another theater a block away. An older man eyed her this time.

"Where you playing now? Here in New York?"

"No, sir. I'm rehearsing with—with Gus Muddle. This is the show I was with last season."

"All right." He tore a ticket, and handed it to her.

"Hope you'll enjoy the show."

She put on her best manners, her pleasantest smile.

"I'm sure I will. Much obliged," she said, and went in.

The theater was even hotter than the street had been, a kind of dull, metallic heat.

They had given her a seat in the eighteenth row. She knew no one would take the seat next to her, so she took off her hat for the first time that day and wiped her forehead, which was wet under her hair, and tried to fluff out her flattened coiffure. She tried to

powder her nose but her skin was too damp for powder. She stretched out a little and closed her eyes.

The show was a poor one, a hodgepodge of musical comedy, a "review" that stayed in town because there must be some place for out-of-town people to go.

The house was almost empty. Eva knew one of the comedians and applauded, hands held high, whenever he came on. Quite decently she tried to applaud for everyone, to earn her seat.

When the show was over she put on her hat and went out in the street again. She thought the air felt a little cooler. At least, it always seemed cooler at night.

If someone would only ask her to have supper with him— She walked slowly to the "L," looking around hopefully, even stopping once and pretending to look in a window. Several people glanced at her, carelessly. No one tried to speak.

At the bottom of the "L" stairs she looked up. The steps seemed unbelievably steep and high. Up and then down again? She decided to take a surface car instead.

A short walk and she was back in Eighth Street. She looked at the letters on the hall table, holding them up, one at a time, to the crooked gas flame. There was no mail for her. She scarcely ever got a letter, anyhow. Who was there to write? Who was there who cared anything about her, in the whole world, anyhow?

She walked very slowly up the stairs. How her feet hurt!

In the stuffy little room, she hurriedly took her clothes off. My, but she was tired! She opened the window wide. It was quiet now. She washed again, at the basin in the corner, and rubbed witchhazel on her swollen feet. She took down her hair, putting the hairpins into a neat little pile. She put some of the new cold cream on her face.

She wound up the clock on the dresser, slipped on the faded pink cot-



ton crêpe night gown, turned out the flickering gaslight and got into bed.

Goodness, it felt good, lying down. She'd get up early in the morning and get to Gus Muddle's promptly at ten. Or before. What if one of those other

girls had the job? Perhaps she could still get it. She couldn't sing much, but she was a fine dancer and—looked pretty good—from the front—when she was made up—

She must—get—something—tomorrow . . .



## EXTASE

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

THE twilight fell about me  
Like some seed-broken husk,  
And like a star my soul burst through  
The cerements of the dusk.

There was this thing about me—  
A garment or a mist—  
When lo! it crumbled at my feet  
In shattered amethyst.

I walked the hills of wonder.  
Like some enchanted sea,  
Meaning and measureless, the night  
Beat skyward up to me.

Surely, some word was uttered,  
Or some far bell was rung  
From those sea-hollows where a more  
Than phantom surf gave tongue!

Surely, some dream returning  
Along the coasts of sleep  
Had stripped from me the swathes of dusk,  
Had dredged me from the deep!

Across the hills of wonder  
My naked body went;  
And the white moon gave back my dream,  
And dream and moon were blent.





# THE THUG

By Richardson Wright

ONCE out in the open country Sergius did not feel so much at his ease. The brilliance of the full moon shone down upon the road, carpeting it with the semblance of silvery ash, and the occasional firs flung black, ominous shadows across his path. No longer could his ear catch the faint, faraway snatch of song or boisterous laughter. There was no sound but the muffled roar of a waterfall in the gorge below.

Was it prudent to return thus, after nightfall, along the deserted highway, with so large a sum? he mused. Would it not have been wiser to have taken the Yatensk road, which would have brought him home at dusk? Had he not heard alarming tales about that fringe of the forest he must cross before reaching the open steppe? He shuddered as he recollected what had befallen the trinket pedler only a few days ago.

It was Vassili's fault. That fellow had such a pleasant way of beckoning to you from his doorstep, of enticing you into his dram shop. There was no resisting his hospitality.

At a sharp pace, Sergius came to a cluster of heavily stockaded huts, the last settlement before reaching the forest. His footsteps were inaudible in the deep dust of the village street. Not a dog heard his passing.

The last house on the right was his wife's brother's place. He hadn't anything particular to say to Nikolai, but the feeble yellow shaft of light from the shuttered window in which hovered a cloud of flies and moths, was inviting. He wanted to break the oppressive stillness by stopping to chat for a

little while. With his staff he knocked three sharp raps on the massive door. Instantly a frenzied clamor of barking and howling arose from the neighboring yards.

"Who's there?"

"Me . . . Serge."

The door opened a few inches and Nickolai appeared, barefooted and clad only in his shirt.

"I was just going to bed, you see," he said as he ushered Sergius in. "You're late. Where have you been?"

"The fair."

"And coming home at this time of night! My, but you're a gay dog!"

Sergius waved his hand and his drink-darkened face awoke in the lamp-light. "Why not come home late? I've sold my five cows, I've had vodka at Vassili's place and . . ."

"Sold your five cows, eh? Well, I hope you got a good price."

"I might have done worse."

"What did you get?" persisted his brother-in-law.

Sergius hesitated, and then answered as though regretfully,

"A hundred and twenty roubles . . . I am not a good hand at striking a bargain."

"So you're on your way home like this, late at night, with all that money! I must say . . ."

"Yes, I know you're right," Sergius replied slowly as the stupor of the drink began to settle over him again. "I'm a witless fellow. I was glad to see your light, I can tell you. I'll stay the night with you and tomorrow . . ."

"Stay here? You must be mad, brother. By morning your wife, Tati-



ana, would be beside herself with worry."

Seated on the bench near the table, his back bent, his elbows on his parted knees, Sergius morosely trailed his staff back and forth in a semi-circle before him.

"What road are you going to take?" pursued Nikolai. "The highroad or that short-cut through the forest?"

"The short cut. That will save a good half hour. . . ." Sergius hesitated. "No, I'll take the post road. That is surer. I shall get home when the saints permit."

Slowly he rose to his feet and headed toward the door. Nikolai laid a detaining hand on his sleeve.

"Wait a moment," he said cheerily. "I'll lend you a pistol. It isn't safe for you to go out without one. It would stand you in better stead than that staff of yours should you meet with robbers. One never knows."

He went to a chest in the corner of the hut and rummaging in the litter brought out a revolver, swathed in a long strip of flannel. Sergius took it gingerly and fingered it over. He was a simple peasant, and he knew nothing of such things. A staff and his own strong arm sufficed him in emergencies. He sauntered to the door and was about to put the weapon to the test, when Nikolai seized his wrist.

"Be careful! It goes off very easily. . . . And we must not rouse the village at this hour. Slip it into your pocket. I hope you will not have use for it."

Sergius kissed Nikolai, grasped his staff and blundered on again into the night.

The silence was intense and penetrating. Now and again a rustling in the underbrush at the roadside made him glance furtively around at the interplay of moonlight and inky shadows. As he continued he began to sing at the top of his voice. His spirits rose, until it occurred to him that he was betraying his whereabouts. In Russia, if one travels the lonely road at night one must pass quietly. Not a post road in the empire

but has its scattering of roadside crosses that mark where thugs and convicts struck down the traveler and robbed him of his goods and life. Serge thought of this and picked out the dustiest side of the road where his steps would fall noiselessly.

In steep zigzags the road presently climbed the hillside to the forest—a black, menacing wall up against the sky. At the corners there were steep piles of rocks, quarried and cast aside a few years ago when the post road was cut through from Odessa. At these points Sergius advanced with more care, half expecting an ambush. He was clearer-headed, too. It seemed that the bag containing those sixscore bright silver roubles must be too prominent, yet he dared not transfer the bag to another pocket now.

At one of these abrupt turnings half way up the hill, he saw two dark forms emerge from the shadows just below the top. Out of the moonlight he sprang, seeking the hospitable gloom of a dense clump of birches. There he crouched, gripping the butt of the revolver with a taut, trembling hand.

They came silently down the hill. . . . Then he heard hoofbeats. . . . Into the moonlight trotted two mounted soldiers, their guns slung across their backs.

He caught a glimpse of their faces and hailed them joyfully. They gave him a glowing sense of safety. Old acquaintances. Often they had happened through his village and stopped off at his hut.

While the shaggy little horses champed the three men chatted.

"You're coming back from the fair, then? And you've sold your five cows. What did you get for them?"

"One hundred and twenty roubles." "So much money!"

Other questions followed and Serge answered them volubly, although he was usually rather a taciturn fellow. He wished to prolong the chat, to avoid being alone.

At last the horses became restive and



the soldiers began to show signs of wanting to get on.

"Well, it isn't prudent to travel like this, Serge, at night, with one hundred and twenty roubles. You should hurry home," added one of them.

"Ah!" cried Sergius. "But I have a pistol. See . . ."

He handed it up. Reining his mount closer, the soldier examined the weapon with a professional eye.

"Hm . . . That's our regular army revolver. How did you get it? . . . Never mind, though. The less I know about such things, the better," he said as he handled the gun lightly.

"Be careful! It will go off!"

The soldier peered down at the weapon. Then he broke into a loud laugh and gave his knee a resounding smack.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the puzzled peasant.

"I'm laughing at this toy. You won't do much harm with that."

"Why not?"

"There are no cartridges in it." And he laughed louder than ever.

Serge was crestfallen, but he held his peace.

"Cheer up, friend! Never mind! I'll

give you a couple." The soldier fumbled in the leather wallet at his belt, slid in two cartridges and slapped back the breech.

"There! Now it will work!"

He tossed the revolver back to Sergius, turned his horse about, and led the way down the hill.

For a time Sergius stared after them. He watched them until they disappeared behind a clump of bushes. Again they appeared at the next bend of the road below. For a while he could hear the faint clatter of their hoofs on the stony road; then silence settled down once more.

He turned and resumed his way. Now he had reached the brow of the hill. Beyond lay the forest, and after that the open stretch of road to his village.

At the point where the road plunged into the forest there came a cracking of twigs in a wayside bush. A man sprang out. Serge had no time to aim. He fired twice, pointblank. The thug staggered and fell backward, a crumpled, black heap in the white moon-bathed dust.

His heart thumping noisily, Sergius bent over the inert form.

It was Nikolai.



THE root of a good deal of discontent is that women haven't discovered the truth that any given husband is approximately as good or bad as any other would have been.



EVERY gentleman dreams of some day becoming a blackguard.



PASSION is the fire; sentiment the smoke.



# TRAGI-COMEDY

By William Devon Thomas

TONY is a waiter.  
He has grimy black hair and dirty  
hands.  
I have made Tony my heir.

\* \* \*

I was raising a glass of saffron  
liqueur to my lips when I discovered  
her.

She was wide and florid with large  
red cheeks and two chins and a mouth  
that was too small and ears that were  
too big.

She had red hair and wore pink.  
I laughed uncontrollably.  
"Look at that comic woman," I said  
to my wife.  
My wife turned.

\* \* \*

I have made Tony my heir.  
Just as I realized with consuming  
terror that the comic woman was the  
reflection of my wife in a distant mir-  
ror, Tony clumsily lurched against the  
mirror and completely shattered it.



## NAUSICA SINGS BEFORE THE COMING OF ULYSSES

By Mary MacMillan

IN the rose twilight of morning,  
In the night flower budding to daybreak,  
I, Nausica of White Arms,  
Lay alone dreaming,

Dreaming of fruit and of flower,  
Violet, jasmine, oleander,  
Flower of the clove and the olive,  
Fruit of pomegranate,

Then came a golden voice calling  
In the midsummer wind from the blue sea,  
I, Nausica of the White Arms,  
Dreamed in the dawning.





# THE MAN THAT DISAPPEARED

By Van Vechten Hostetter

## I

TUTTLE, reviewing his forty-second year with his characteristic care and freedom from passion and illusion, saw clearly that his accomplishments had failed to fulfill his expectations. Being without conceit, he did not persuade nor even try to persuade himself that chance or the world's incapability of appreciating his worth had retarded his progress. Being only ordinally ambitious, he was not seriously disturbed. He simply observed that he had only maintained his position in his profession whereas he should have gained a higher one and made that secure. And, having observed so much, he resolved upon greater effort, effort that should over-average the shortcoming of the last year and carry him from eminence to preëminence in the next.

Tuttle at forty-three looked back and saw that for all his striving he had gained nothing. In this city that was becoming more and more a city of wonderful and beautiful buildings, he had expected to conceive and rear the most wonderful and the most beautiful. They were to have been imposing monuments of his genius, to stand for ages, strong as the rock and steel of which they were made, inspiring the world. But the greatest works had been done by other men, several of them by younger men whom he had once employed in his own offices. And the Academy Prize, which he had sought, had been taken from him by one whom he had contemptuously regarded as an abecedarian.

Tuttle sat at his desk after his men

had gone, his square, sharp chin in his hand, biting his thin lips, gazing darkly out into the dusk. A pile of drawings and blue-prints, brought in for his critical examination, lay forgotten before him. Things that were made of wood and stone and steel he understood: he was studying, trying to analyze, trying to understand the strange structure of his own nature. Examining the creative work of another architect, he could discover or sense unerringly all the purposes that had been in mind, all the effects that had been sought, knowing how the builder had succeeded here and why he had failed there: but the purpose of his own being seemed utterly beyond his understanding, despite his vague yet positive consciousness that the purpose was failing. Why with his genius—which by cold introspection he knew was his—and with his energy he should be falling farther away from the goal he sought was a problem he strove in vain to solve.

The more he pondered and struggled with it the more hopeless seemed the solution. He was filled with uneasiness and he felt that uneasiness was giving way to alarm. Still, since he was but ordinally eager for the greatest success, why should he be so alarmed at the prospect of failure to achieve his highest ambitions? He was without family and without disposition to have one; to be admired by the world and esteemed and envied by his professional fellows were desirable, but not profoundly so; he had more than money enough for his needs and his wants, which were simple; what did it matter, then, if he should never be the greatest builder in the world? What would it



matter if he should abandon his work and his ambition and spend the rest of his life in—simply living? There was no reason that he could see or find, still he knew it was impossible for him to do that.

Tuttle stared into the darkness that had followed the dusk. The building across the way and the street far below were deserted. The thought came, making him more miserable, that the thousands who had been all around him through the day had all gone somewhere to share their joys or bear their sorrows with others. Tuttle had no one to go to, and he needed some one. Through the transom behind him the hall light shone on the window pane, and as he saw his face reflected, with dark brows contracted and forehead wrinkled, he suffered more intensely with the deeper realization that some strange thing was wrong with him and that he was sorely in need of some one to go to for comfort and courage and advice.

Tuttle realized painfully that he had grown away from his friends. He had not realized it before because he had not felt the need of them. There were men that he had been close to here in the city when he had set out on his career; he saw them at long intervals now and only to talk of casual things. His employes were, of course, employes, and the men that had left him and gone out for themselves were—former employes and competitors. The men that bought his services were business men and he had always dealt with them as such. In his searching for a friend, Tuttle was driven back to his university days, and there with some surprise he found one, or, rather, a possible one. It was Henry Jardine. All the others had forgotten him, no doubt, as easily as he had forgotten them. Probably, he thought, they had forgotten each other.

He had almost forgotten Jardine, too, and would have done so but for occasional letters, letters that had brought no response from him, despite their warm friendliness. It seemed strange

that Jardine should have kept writing to him all these years, but he was glad he had. And Jardine had always begged to hear from Tuttle "for old time's sake," and said he should love to see him again and "talk everything over," "even though you've become a big man and I'm still a little one and always shall be." It seemed even stranger that this man should still care for him as Tuttle recalled little "shabby turns" of which he had made Jardine the victim in those old days.

Tuttle got up and switched on the light and went searching through his files. He never destroyed a letter—a wise business policy that more than once had proved its value to him—and he knew he had Jardine's. He found them and read them over. They were friendly and full of sympathy. He had run through them hastily when they were received and had not fully realized how deep they were; now they soothed his spirit and reassured him in a measure, at the same time filling him with a desire to see and grip hands and speak with this man whose affection for him had not died.

When he had read the last letter, Tuttle left a brief and characteristically unexplanatory note advising his assistant that he was going away for a few days and set off to see Henry Jardine, fifteen hundred miles away.

## II

It was one of those young and robust Iowa communities that are much more than towns and a little less than cities. Tuttle arrived in the early night and telephoned Jardine. His heart was thrilled as he heard the voice, big and heavy, a little deeper than when he had heard it last. "By God! This is great! I thought you'd given me up for good." He was the same genial, simple-minded, open-hearted fellow he had been in school. "Where are you now?"

"At the station; I just came in on the Rock Island."

"Oh, that's the Union Depot," Jardine laughed. "Well, you wait right



there about half an hour and I'll drive in for you. You see, I live in the country, but it won't be long."

Jardine bent over him and squeezed his hand until it ached. Tuttle was no little man, but Jardine was almost a giant; he had been considered a rare football prospect; but had been found too slow and too lazy.

"By God, Tuttle, it's great to see you again. You don't know how hard I've hoped for this. Sometimes I've been near getting on a train and going East for you. What brings you out this way?"

"Why, I just came to see you," said Tuttle.

"Just to see me," Jardine cried in wonder. "Well, that beats everything. I'd have thought I was in great luck if you just dropped off to see me, and here you've made a special trip."

"It's worth it, old man," Tuttle said. "I needed to see you. I feel better already."

"So do I," said Jardine, picking up Tuttle's bag. "Right around here's the car."

Tuttle followed him into the little one-seated roadster, which looked unimpressive enough but throbbed with power as they shot away. Like a skilled driver knowing his way, Jardine sped the motor through the dimly lighted and unlighted streets, and in two or three minutes they were on the country road.

Tuttle studied him and his heart was filled with envy. Jardine was bigger and fatter than ever, as much a good-natured, care-free boy as in school days. There was no gray in his yellow hair and there were no lines in his face like those in Tuttle's. His eyes were clear and bright, clearer and brighter, it seemed to Tuttle, than he had ever seen them before. As they bore steadily on the road ahead the blue in them flashed and glittered like steel. Tuttle could not remember that flash and glitter in them in university days.

"You haven't changed much," Jardine said at length.

"A lot more than you have," Tuttle answered. "I've changed a lot more

in looks and a lot more in other ways."

"I can't see it," said Jardine. "I guess it's mostly in your mind. You see you've been in that fast, heart-breaking city game, and after a fellow's been in that a while he gets an idea sometimes that it's smashing him."

"I don't know whether it's smashing me or not," said Tuttle. "That's one of the things I want to find out. Maybe you can help me."

"I think I can do something for you," Jardine said thoughtfully. "I'll take up your case as soon as we get home. I guess you've got a lot to tell me about yourself, Tuttle." His fat lips curled in a smile that might have been a little cynical if the lips had not been so fat. "You always were good at telling about yourself, anyway. I'll tell you about myself first and get that out of the way. It won't take long."

Tuttle smiled a little shamedly at the allusion to his own egotism, but said nothing.

"I don't know but I might have made a big name for myself," Jardine went on, "if I'd tried, but I didn't. I found this place and saw it was growing and offered pretty fair prospects for a man that wanted a nice little comfortable fortune and didn't want to work too hard to get it, so I just settled down here and started building houses—two-story ones, mostly—and selling them as fast as I built them and then building more. I guess that's about all there is to it. Nothing wonderful, nothing unusual. The houses are pretty good; nobody has ever been cheated on them; still, any ordinary first class man could build just as good ones."

"Married?" asked Tuttle.

"I should say no! Never fell in love since I was able to keep a wife. I've got a pretty nice little place out here that would make a good home for some woman, but I don't know of any that'll ever be in it. This house is a little out of the ordinary and I'm just a little bit proud of it. Here we are now!"

Jardine had turned sharply and now shot the car up a wide side road, stop-



ping it with a jerk a little way from the house.

Tuttle, quite unprepared for what he saw, repressed a smile with extreme difficulty. Then as he looked first at the building and again at Jardine, amusement gave way to a feeling something like pity. The thing was a joke architecturally, yet to Jardine it must be an artistic creation—a supreme effort to rise above the commonplace. Surely it was above the commonplace. It was a big, square one-story structure of gray or brown stone, lying as if hidden among lofty maples that rose all around it. It was unlighted and long rows of square, deep windows, darker than its dark walls accentuated its grim aspect. It looked more like some merciless prison house than a home and the suggestion of a place of confinement was more impressed upon Tuttle's mind by a round tower that rose from one corner, cold and black among the trees.

Tuttle could not help smiling inwardly as he recalled Jardine's innocent and pathetic belief that he might have made a name for himself if he had gone among the world's great builders. Yet the smile did not last long, for there was something effectively oppressive about the appearance of this house, as Jardine called it, which did not conduce to smiling.

"Poor Jardine," thought Tuttle. "God knows what effect he was after, but he did get some effect. Nobody could deny him that."

Within Tuttle found an atmosphere of cheerful hominess that contrasted sharply with the forbidding exterior of the place. He remembered that Jardine in school had shown a fondness for good books and pictures and had displayed some artistic taste in the arrangement of his living quarters. These had not failed to grow and develop. Perhaps, after all, Jardine with ambition and the benefits of association with great artists might have been himself no mean artist. Tuttle was comfortably surprised to have his first dismal impression dissolved and his heart grew lighter as he sat and

smoked before the hearth and listened to Jardine's steady and rather inconsequential talk as he brought lunch.

"Sorry I can't give you a fancy party," he said. "Might have arranged it, but you didn't give me much notice. I used to have some servants around, but they're a nuisance; I let them all go. I never thought much of the servant idea, anyhow. I eat in town most of the time, but I always have a little stuff around that I can cook up myself and then some canned stuff. How do you live?" Without allowing Tuttle opportunity to answer, Jardine went off into speculation. "A valet, I suppose, and a fine apartment or a house and a housekeeper and lots of worry about how honest the servants are. Servants are a bad thing. You never can trust a servant. Anybody that'll be a personal servant for somebody else is either too ignorant or too dishonest to be any good."

So he went on, giving Tuttle time only for "yesses" and "noes" until they had finished their repast of cold chicken and bread and beans and coffee and cheese. Then, after Tuttle had lighted his cigar, he filled a blackened pipe and settled back in his chair.

"Now tell me what brings you here. What's the trouble?"

"There's trouble surely," said Tuttle, relieved to be able to open his heart at last, "but I don't just know what it is."

"I knew there was," Jardine said. "You would never have come if there hadn't been."

"That's not very kind," Tuttle said, a little unhappily. He hesitated, somewhat disinclined to speak, but his need was too great. "The trouble is just this, old man: I'm failing, breaking—and I don't know why. I'm falling back, falling back all the time and all the time I'm fighting to go ahead. It's getting my nerves. If I were sick, if I could find anything wrong with me I could remedy it or try to anyway, but I can't find it. Jardine, it's just hell."

"Listen," said Jardine. "What I'm going to tell you will hurt—at first—but it may do you good. It's too late



to talk much tonight, but I'll tell you something about yourself and you can think it over during the night. Tomorrow we'll talk some more."

"Go on" said Tuttle, preparing for a blow. There was something impressive in the look on Jardine's face despite its round fatness.

"You're unsocial. You're utterly selfish. A normal man may be ambitious or unambitious. If he's ambitious he has legitimate social reasons for his ambition. He wants to succeed for the benefit of the world or his wife or his children or his friends. Every normal man can tell you why he wants to succeed. You want to succeed and you don't know why. It's not because you want to make anybody happy with your success. You simply want to succeed and that's all. And a man like that can't succeed for the simple reason that he isn't a complete man.

"Tuttle, I know more about you than you suppose. I've watched you. I was your friend all through school. You had other friends. Every one you used just as long as you had anything to use them for and then you threw them away. When you were in trouble you went to your friends. When they were in trouble they went to you—until they found out it was useless. Here's one small thing I remember. You were hard up one day and borrowed my evening clothes to pawn. Having got the money you needed, you forget all about the evening clothes and me. I had to go and get them out. There were a thousand things like that. I have done a thousand things for you and yet you would never do anything for me, no matter how easy. I said to myself you would never really succeed. I watched to see if I was right. Why, your reputation is based on what the men you hired did. They worked for you because they believed in you, and when they found out what you were they left you. You took the credit for what they did. They despise you as everybody that went to school with you came to despise you. Your only

hope, Tuttle, is in learning to be a real friend, learning not to use people but to serve them. Your only hope is to learn the beauty of reciprocity. Your only hope is in learning not to forget the men who help you, not to desert them as soon as you have made all the use of them you can."

Jardine stopped, but he still looked hard into Tuttle's eyes. His face, fat as it was, was hard and his eyes flashed yet seemed to burn steadily. Tuttle was almost frightened.

"I guess I came to the wrong man," he managed to say.

"No," said Jardine. "I told you it would hurt, but you mustn't be foolish and think I'm not your friend. I've told you the only thing that can help you in God's world—if it is God's—and I wouldn't tell you if I weren't your friend . . . wouldn't take the trouble."

He got up slowly and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"Come on now, Tuttle; I'll take you up to your room and you can think it all over during the night and you'll feel a lot better in the morning."

"All right," said Tuttle, "all right, old man. I guess I can take bitter medicine."

Hurt as he was now, he could admit to himself that the treatment might not be without benefit, and if he liked it less by daylight it would be easy enough to cut his visit short.

"Good," said Jardine, leading the way upstairs. "I'll have to put you up in the tower, I guess. It's the only bedroom I've got that's fit for high class company. You won't mind, though. You'll find the air's good up here—better than in one of those city skyscrapers."

As they reached the little square hallway, Jardine dropped his burnt-out match and fumbled for the light switch. When he found it they were standing before the opened door of a dark room. The door was a massive thing of stone or concrete. The room was a cell.

Cold with dread, Tuttle turned half



away, meaning to run. Into his mind had flashed the horrible truth, the meaning of Jardine's supposed affection that lived in spite of neglect, the meaning of his effusive manner, his inordinate joy at Tuttle's visit, his extreme loquacity, the building of the grotesque house. The man was insane. Tuttle screamed as Jardine's powerful arms caught and lifted him and hurled him into the blackness of the cell. Dazed, he lay there and saw the light fade as the ponderous door swung and closed.

Then he heard bolts shot home and the crazy triumphant laughter of Jardine as he went down the stairs.

### III

LIKE many another man who has lived through the panic of fear, Tuttle found his wits returning sharper than he had ever known them to be before. And he had the courage of a man with nothing to lose. He must escape and he would escape. A madman's brain must have slipped somewhere, could not have barred every way to freedom. Criminals before now had pitted their wits and resource against the genius and science of prison builders and the vigilance of prison keepers. They had driven and ground their way to liberty. What they, themselves half crazed, had been able to accomplish against cold reason, surely could be possible for him against a lunatic.

In the utter darkness Tuttle surveyed and studied his prison. It was a square room nine or ten feet in length and width. It was of stone or concrete. Tuttle could feel the smooth blocks and the rough lines of mortar between them. The ceiling he could touch with his finger tips when he lifted his arms. In the door, some three feet from the floor, was an aperture five or six inches square, evidently to permit the passage of food and water and air. Opposite was a similar aperture to admit light and air. At any rate he should not die of suffocation.

Examining these openings, Tuttle learned that the walls of his prison

measured some four inches in thickness. To cut through the cement would not be an impossible task, given time and the implements. Tuttle took out his penknife and dug at the mortar viciously. The blade snapped. Well, he had something still to work with. The handle of the knife was bone and brass. With this he went feverishly to work beneath the window. There was no time to be lost. The operation would require weeks—months, perhaps, with the soft tool—and he must work against a possible time when some mad notion to come in and kill him would seize Jardine. The great stone block measured two feet by one, and with it removed it would be simple for Tuttle to push his body through the enlarged opening and lower himself by means of a rope made of his clothing. He was not more than fifty feet from the ground and he could drop the last twenty if necessary.

When the first gray of dawn showed through the window, Tuttle lay down to rest his aching shoulders and arms and hands, and fell asleep. He was awakened in daylight by the smell of food and coffee. They had been set in the little opening in the base of the door: so Jardine did not mean—now, at any rate, to starve him to death.

It was strong ham and eggs and greasy fried potatoes, an unattractive mess to Tuttle, but he took it and ate it avidly. The coffee was in a tall tin can. There was plenty of it and Tuttle found it better than he had hoped. It gave him strength and courage. He was prepared to face Jardine if he should come for him; he almost wanted Jardine to come and throw open the door, giving him the chance to fight for his life—but Jardine did not come. Presently Tuttle heard the heavy chugging of the car and then heard it growing fainter and fainter until it was lost. Jardine had gone to town.

Tuttle could see nothing but the tops of trees through his window in the thick wall. There was no possibility of calling help. He was facing away from the main road, he supposed. There



was nothing to do but pursue the slow method he had adopted in the night. All day he worked, scratching and digging against the hard mortar until his fingers were numb and all his muscles ached, resting and going back again and again to his torturing task.

He was glad when evening came and he heard Jardine return. This compelled cessation of his labor for a while, for Jardine might come to see if his prisoner was still safe and Tuttle could not risk discovery of his plan.

Presently Jardine's step sounded outside and Tuttle saw his fat hand set more food and coffee within reach. In a moment he was gone again and Tuttle sighed heavily as he took up the plate and moved back from the door. It was fried porkchops and potatoes to-night. Tuttle worn with his day's labor, found them more appetizing than the delicacies of his hotel at home. The chops he gnawed until they were clean—Jardine granted him no knife nor fork. When he had finished he smashed off part of one bone under his heel and put the rest back in the aperture for Jardine to take away. That bit of bone would not be missed by Jardine and it would serve if the knife handle should be worn away too soon.

Tuttle dug away at the wall until he fell exhausted and sleep brought him to another day. This was as the first had been. After Jardine had gone again Tuttle came to a full realization of what was in the madman's mind—solitary confinement. Crazy as he was, he yet knew that to be shut away from the world, where he could see no man, no woman, no living thing, would break the reason of the strongest man and make him a miserable lunatic. The thought filled Tuttle with a new dread, which grew more terrible as he saw how little all his labor had so far accomplished against the merciless wall.

He realized that, despite his lack of intimate relationship with men, his association with them, such as it was, had been essential to his being. He

realized he could not live without them. He wondered what they were doing back home, wondered if they had yet become alarmed or would become alarmed when day after day he failed to appear. He had told no one where he was going. He had come here at night. Suppose he should be searched for, would he be found? Could his mind and soul bear this utter isolation from all association with living things until he could escape? The fear that it could not, grew in his heart until it throbbed. His whole body was trembling with fever and chill. He caught up the knife and rushed frantically at the wall, but the strength was gone from his arms and hands and fingers. He fell to pacing back and forth in his narrow prison, striving to regain his courage, but there was no place in his heart or mind for courage to come in. The horrible picture of the end, two lunatics—himself and Jardine—fighting to the death of both in this crazy house, filled his brain. So through the day. When Jardine came at night with more food Tuttle wanted to speak to him and possibly hasten the end of the horror, but he was afraid.

Day after day and night after night passed. Visions of coming madness filled Tuttle's brain in his waking hours and dreams of it tortured his sleep and made it a nightmare. His mind was breaking; he knew it was breaking; the end was sure. Working against the stone was hopeless. There was no strength in his arms. He was lost.

Then one night when Tuttle awoke from a ghastly dream he heard a scraping sound outside his cell. The first hope he had known in weeks flickered feebly in his heart. He recalled stories of men in solitary confinement who had been saved from madness by insects and vermin. He ran to the opening in the base of the door and reached out as far as he could toward the floor. He could not touch it; he could reach nothing. Still he heard the scraping sound. He



went back and found the tall coffee can and set it on the floor outside. It was a rat. He heard its sharp little claws scratching eagerly on the tin. In another instant the thing had climbed within his reach; he caught it with fierce joy and took it into his cell.

Tuttle, sitting in the middle of the hard floor, held the animal in his lap and stroked it tenderly and reassuringly, as if it had been a kitten. He could feel its heart fluttering fearfully against his leg, but it lay quite still, and as Tuttle's hand moved over its body he knew why this wild thing had so willingly come to him. It was starved. It had been too weak to scale the wall to the opening and make its own way.

When fear had been allayed Tuttle provided bits of meat, the leavings of his evening meal, and the rat ate them voraciously, gnawing feebly at the bones. Tuttle watched with keen interest in the shaft of faint moonlight that came through the window. The thing had been ready to die. Caught somewhere up in this hell, it had fought for freedom until it could fight no longer. Its claws were worn off and useless from hopeless scratching against the stones.

Day followed day and week week. Tuttle shared his coarse meals, pushed into the cell by the same crazy, unseen hand, with his fellow in misery, and the stone floor was their bed. The study of this rat afforded all the diversion his mind demanded if not all it desired. Tuttle discovered that it was capable of affection and knew that it regarded him as its savior with human gratitude. He learned that it possessed intelligence apart from instinct and could be taught and trained as a dog. In a short time it understood that at a snapping and pointing of his fingers it must scamper to one certain corner which could not be visible to Jardine should he by any chance or freak peer into the cell. Jardine, lunatic as he was, might be still sane enough to know

that this animal could save his prisoner from raving madness. To leave the cell was quite impossible for the rat with its crippled feet, but it seemed to have no desire to do so; this, Tuttle thought, was the natural result of its horrible experience outside.

Tuttle ground away patiently around the great block under the window. His mind was free. He had been here so long that he no longer feared a new turn of Jardine's crazed brain would defeat his plan. He grew strong and worked harder until the muscles in his fingers and arms were like steel. The darkness of the cell was sufficient protection against discovery by night, and when Jardine was heard lumbering up the stairs it was easy to fill the crevices with a paste made of old bread that was kept for the purpose.

The time came when Tuttle knew that six hours only lay between him and liberty. Through the day he had striven, but all his labor had not been enough to complete the task. Caution and the love of liberty fought in his breast. Should he wait until Jardine's usual departure in the morning or should he go on tonight? He had worn the mortar so thin in places that further grinding tonight was dangerous unless he meant to escape tonight. Jardine, no doubt, scanned the window with his crazy eyes every day before he went away.

Tuttle tore his coat into strips and tied them end to end, testing them as well as he could with his powerful arms. He could make no other test. He laughed as he thought of the grotesque picture he would present to the town, coatless, haggard and bearded. He would be thought a lunatic surely until he could tell of his months of torture.

With what was left of the knife handle—he had saved it for this purpose—Tuttle worked hour after hour, grinding away at the cement. The moon rose and sank and still he dug, never stopping even to brush away the sweat that boiled and flowed down into his eyes and over his face. No sec-



ond could be spared. He could not rest his aching arms. He had misjudged his strength, but he had broken through the wall in places and now it was too late to delay.

Dawn was in the sky when the last bit of cement gave way and Tuttle dragged the heavy stone into his tortured arms, and summoning all his strength, set it gently down on the floor. In another instant he had looped one end of his life rope around the block and flung the other from the window. The opening was still none too large, but Tuttle, after one quick glance at the earth below pushed himself through and started down, hand under hand. His heart hammered in his breast. Fear of discovery at this last instant assailed his brain. The blood rushed to his head and throbbed and pounded. His back ached and burned with the strain on the overtaxed muscles. His arms seemed pulling out of their sockets. Once his hand slipped and the cloth cut it, but he caught himself and went on, biting his lip until the blood ran from it, too, when he held

his weight with the bleeding hand. Then there rose a wild cry, half human, half animal, a prolonged plaintive cry of misery—the wail of a child or a woman in distress—the squeal of a rat. Tuttle heard it pierce the still morning like a shriek from hell and the blood went cold in his body.

He dropped, fell forward on his hands, picked himself up, weakly to run. Then there was a crash of glass and Jardine, a fat, wild thing, naked with that crazy glitter in his eyes, sprang upon him, bearing him down. He beat his head on the ground until he was helpless. Then he carried him back into the house and up the strairs and into another cell. There he threw him on the floor.

"Wasn't I right?" he asked. "I guess you think I'm crazy—*old man*—"—he laughed—"but I'm not. I'll see that you don't get out of here, and I'll see you have no friends to use and abandon."

Then he went out and swung the door and Tuttle heard bolts clanking into their home.



## LURES

By Babette Deutsch

SWART rusty pine-boughs hold  
Thin threads of pallid gold.  
At the white highroad's turn  
Coppery bushes burn.  
The sky is clear and green.  
The light is hard and keen.  
But sharper, shriller, cries  
Your absent face . . . your eyes.



HUMOR is the consciousness of the nothingness of anything.



# DAY DREAMS

By Mary Allen

THE tired little working girl wove  
day dreams.

"I shall marry a tall, handsome  
millionaire. . . .

"I shall ride in a purple limousine upholstered in pale violet, with my little Pom at my side.

"I shall select jewels to match the color of the gowns I wear.

"I shall live in a large white house with servants in green livery to attend me.

"There will always be faint strains of hidden music and the fragrance of fresh flowers.

"As I stroll across the terrace a peacock will follow me. . . ."

\* \* \*

After vainly trying to attract her attention, the tall, handsome millionaire, who had always longed to marry a girl just like the tired little working girl arose and left the street-car.



# HUMORESQUE

By Nelson Antrim Crawford

WHEN Arthur's slender lavender wife died in bearing a child,

He wept decorously,  
Bore himself punctiliously in the ritual of the requiem,  
Gave the courteous young priest a gold coin,  
Then went home

And composed, with the aid of a rhyming dictionary,  
A ballade of sorrow  
And a rondel about death  
In the manner of Henley.



THE way to be liked is simple. Always listen sympathetically when men boast of their wives and women complain of their husbands.



WHEN a man laughs at his troubles he loses his friends: they can never forgive the loss of their prerogative.



# LIMELIGHT

By Lee Pape

JOE GREEN, handing her the three two-cent stamps across the counter, timidly manœuvred a grazing of finger tips.

"Go to the Lib tonight, Lucy?" he asked. "Lillian Santley in 'The Price of Truth.' I hear it's a swell picture."

"I hate Lillian Santley," Lucy replied coldly.

The truth was, she hated the entire world. On her way to the drug store she had caught sight of Grace Curley, with her white shoes, and her white face, and her slanting white hat.

"If she thinks that's *style!*" she had raged to herself. "The—the *flirt!*"

And now, as she posted her letters, she saw Grace deliberately crossing the street to talk to her.

"I'm goin' to the Liberty with a friend of yours tonight, Lucy."

Lucy gazed at her politely.

"Friend o' mine?"

Grace nodded brightly, "Sam Quirk."

"Oh, him!"

"I see his picture's in the *Bulletin* again today."

"Yes?" Lucy moved on, but something made her pause and say, "Won any *cups* lately?"—and then hurry away without giving Grace time to answer. . . .

So his picture was in the paper again! Probably full-length, in running togs, with "Shamrock A. C." large on the jersey. And underneath, "Quirk Romps in Ahead of the Field"; or "Shamrock's Mercury Again an Easy Winner." The thrills, at first, those pictures had sent through her! The queenliness of the Sunday promenades on Broad Street, his arm through hers—the glow from head to feet each time

he raised his hat to Sunday-dressed girls craning necks and distorting faces in piteous efforts to be recognized. The awe-struck Sunday-dressed boys, her friends or his, removing their hats to the extreme reach of their arms because she was with *him*.

But glory seeks glory, and the little candle of Lucy's good looks, in the fierce white light that beats upon a newspaper's sporting page, was as an arc light at midday. The piano top in her parlor reflected no gleaming row of prize cups! She wasn't pointed out on the streets as the darling of a dozen dance halls. . . .

"Lucy!" said her mother, rebukingly. "You're not eating!"

Madge, her younger sister, regarded her severely.

"You must want to lose your appetite pretty bad," she observed, "if it's anything connected with that Sam Quirk."

"It's not," said Lucy, carefully buttering a morsel of bread. "Besides, I *am* eating. All I care to."

"As for that Grace Curley," resumed Madge, who always "that"-ed people not in her favor—"as for *her*, I can dance better myself. Only I can't squint and smirk like her, or at least I *wouldn't*, and that's what counts in a popular applause contest. As long as you make faces trying to look like Mrs. Castle, it don't seem to matter about your feet."

"Really," Lucy remarked languidly, "I'm not interested in Grace Curley."

"Oh, *deah!*" And Madge made a gesture fairly dainty for a hand holding a goodish piece of potato on a fork.

"Anyway," the mother ended the dis-



cussion, "nobody has a right to let anything interfere with their eating."

Mrs. Horton was a large woman who seemed to flow around half the circumference of the little circular dining-room table. Lucy, sensing some truth in her philosophy, ate her dessert almost with relish. A little later, when Joe Green, released for the evening, was passing the open parlor window, she smiled at him so cordially that he was emboldened to stop and repeat his invitation.

"Or, if you don't want to go to the Lib, we can—"

"I do want to go to the Lib," said Lucy.

And to the "Lib" they went, where, once seated, Lucy discovered that they were settled directly behind Grace and Sam Quirk. The famous eyes of Lillian Santley, picking out Joe Green, with almost embarrassing unerringness, from his fellows in the audience, held him spellbound, but Lucy, except occasionally when the tall dark leading man came especially near or looked especially handsome, stared with hypnotized fixedness at Grace Curley's impossibly blond, modishly molded hair. The happy ending having dissolved into "Good-night," Joe breathed from his heart, "Isn't she a *wonder*?"

Lucy tore her gaze from Grace's hair.

"I think she's a *sight*!" she hissed, and stabbed on her hat.

## II

OUTSIDE the theatre the two couples stood together a few minutes. Lucy introduced Joe.

"Sam Quirk?" he inquired, starting.

"The same," said Sam.

"I've saw your picture in the papers," Joe said with awe. "You—look different, dressed up."

"You're somewhat of a stranger, Lucy," Sam remarked easily.

Lucy picked at a button on her jacket. She could see a whispering little cluster of girls gazing at him wide-eyed.

"You think so? Oh, I don't know."

"I been meaning to drop around and see you. Some day soon."

"Oh," said Lucy. "I—I'm not doing anything Saturday night."

"Next Saturday? I think I've got something on next Saturday. Some time soon, though."

Grace, looking at Lucy from under her lashes, pensively put out and drew back the tip of her tongue. Lucy's body stiffened, and she drew Joe away, almost forcibly. He kept looking back.

"If I could run like *that* boy!"

"You've seen him—look the way you're going. I don't know as it's anything great to be able to run faster than other people."

"But," protested Joe, "he can run a mile in four and a half minutes!"

"Well, with legs that long, why shouldn't he?"

No immediate reply offering itself, Joe mentioned ice cream. Lucy refused. Joe, taken aback, considered suggesting a little walk, thought better of it, and took her home.

Mrs. Horton and Madge were in the dining room, feasting on doughnuts, hot from the baker's cellar, and lemonade. Lucy sat on the edge of a chair and watched them moodily.

"Have one, Lucy," Madge invited. "Jelly in the middle."

"No," said Lucy.

But soon the delicious smell of them cast a spell over her. She rose and took one and bit into it abstractedly. Her thoughts being elsewhere, her teeth, after the manner of teeth, shirked their duty. They gave her no warning of the chip of wood that she had bitten out of the doughnut. . . .

Her mother and sister thumped her on the back, shook her, appealed to her passionately to cough it up—in vain.

"The hospital" cried Madge.

It was just around the corner, and thither the distressed Lucy was hurried. A very young interne dislodged the chip and wrote the following, all on a line, in a big book: "*Lucy Horton, 18. White. 722 Hemstead Street. Foreign body in pharynx. 11.15 p. m.*"



## III

THE next morning Lucy awoke none the worse except for a slight rawness in her throat and a rather too vivid memory of the experience. During breakfast came a ring at the doorbell. It was not the postman's ring, so there was no race to answer it. Madge took two more sips of coffee and went to the front door. She came back with a strange look on her face.

"It's a reporter from the *Times*, Lucy. About—about last night. He wants to see you."

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Horton with awe, and lowered a spoonful of egg that she was on the point of putting into her mouth. "Don't you forget to tell him about me and Madge."

The reporter, a "district man" of about the age of the very young interne, was inspecting the photographs on the parlor mantel. He particularly wanted a photograph, he told Lucy.

"Why," said Lucy, "how—how silly!"

The reporter privately was of the same opinion, but the voice of his assistant city editor over the telephone—"If you love your job, get busy and dig me up a picture or two out there—quick!" still rang in his ears. He pleaded so eloquently that Lucy agreed to consult her mother. She found her just outside the parlor door, with Madge.

"Why certainly give him one!" Mrs. Horton greeted her, and, hastening upstairs, she brought down Lucy's best photograph. She presented it to the reporter in person, together with a most explicitly graphic report of her own first-aid measures. The reporter backed out the front door as she was recommencing the recital for the third time.

Thanks to a conscientious messenger boy, a temporary dearth of pictures, and a photo-engraving department trained in the ways of speed, Lucy's photograph "made" the noon edition. Only fear of action for libel on the part of an outraged baker prevented the promotion of the doughnut to a

poisoned doughnut. On the *Times*, fiction was frequently thought stranger than truth.

The Hortons possessed a telephone, a newly installed three party line; it had a special code of rings for each of the three parties, and, as the other two codes also resounded in the Hortons' front hall, the household was kept in quite a continual state of metallic vibration and suspense. . . . Six sets of peals, each divided into fives, summoned Lucy six times in half an hour. Six times she assured anxious friends that she was safe and sound; that it was true, about the doughnut; that she had not yet seen the *Times*. In a lull after the sixth call, she took off her dusting cap and apron (Lucy dusted while Madge sold gloves in a department store), and went down to the corner newsstand for a copy of the *Times*. She was in time to buy the last one.

She turned over after a guilty glance at the first page. There it was, on the third! It didn't seem to resemble her very much. . . . Then she saw the two-column headline streaming above: *Pretty Girl Bites Sliver of Wood from Doughnut; Almost Dies*.

Blushing scarlet, Lucy hurriedly folded the paper and started for home. Mrs. Kelly and Mrs. Eisenbray were on Mrs. Kelly's front steps; Mrs. Kelly seemed to be reading aloud from a newspaper. Lucy repressed a panicky impulse to cross the street.

"Here she is now!" cried Mrs. Eisenbray. "We're reading about you, Lucy!"

Lucy swallowed.

"It—it was all that reporter," she stammered. "He—I—"

"Good luck just seems to drop on some people from the clouds," commented Mrs. Kelly, a trifle bitterly. "Here's me—struck three times in two years by automobiles and times without number a witness swore on a magistrate's bible, and never once has me name got in the paper, much less me picture. And there's you—you take



one bite from a doughnut and the world rings with your fame!"

Lucy thrilled all over. They weren't laughing at her—they were envying her! She walked home treading on air.

#### IV

"SAM QUIRK just called up," her mother announced, meeting her at the door and taking the paper from under her arm.

"Yes?" replied Lucy, and shrugged slightly. But her eyes shone.

"... It don't mention me till about the middle," said Mrs. Horton resentfully.

The other two parties of the three party line must have thought the Hortons had more than their share of calls that day. Three of the solicitous inquirers, young men whom Lucy had almost forgotten, requested permission to call on specific evenings in the near future—the nearest being that very evening. . . .

Ted Glackens was not a young man of ideas, and laughed unnecessarily, emptily and frequently, but, as his glove-fitting clothes were always faultlessly pressed and the silk poems about his neck of the sort that haberdashers display in their windows as "scarves," and never "neckties," Lucy decided

that the chance of Sam's seeing her escorted by this glass of fashion was worth the certainty of being bored. She suggested the Liberty, the almost invariable scene of Sam's evenings.

He was there, and Grace was with him. They met at the ticket window. Grace, as she looked at Lucy, tried to mask the envy in her gray-green eyes.

Sam's face lighted up.

"How's everything, Lucy? I was hoping I'd see you. I called you up this afternoon."

"Yes?" said Lucy, with a faraway smile. "Do you know Mr. Glackens? Miss Curley, Mr. Glackens. Mr. Quirk, Mr. Glackens."

Sam scowled as he shook hands with the spruce Glackens.

"How about Saturday night, Lucy? Didn't you say something about Saturday night?"

"Did I? How do you mean?"

"Why, about—I'd like to come around if you—if you haven't—"

"I have, I think . . . Saturday?—yes, I have," Lucy fibbed heroically. "Sorry—perhaps some other time. Hurry, Ted, or we'll miss the comedy."

And, with a captivating little nod for Sam, and the sweetest of little smiles for Grace, she placed a hand within the slender arm of Mr. Glackens and was gone.



TWO things are repugnant to woman: conversation and silence. The first man who learned this invented a game called "love," and ever since there has been no other way of effectively mastering a woman's tongue.



FRIVOLITY in a mature and beautiful woman may often be only the mask of her contempt. On this account a wise man always mistrusts her gayety when he himself is responsible for it.





# LE SABOT DE CHERININA

By Edmond Lahaye

A CAUSE d'un différend survenu au sujet de certaines limites litigieuses, entre les ingénieurs de l'Etat et plusieurs particuliers, les coupes de bois avaient été arrêtées momentanément. Comme il fallait des gens peu exigeants, incorruptibles et braves, pour servir de sequestre, on pensa de suite à Edmond Cherinina, le contremaître, et à sa jeune épouse Régina, qui acceptèrent, pour ce faire, de passer la mauvaise saison tout en haut de la montagne, dans une maison en planches, couverte de tuiles rouges, établie solidement afin de résister facilement aux pluies, aux tourmentes de neige, et aux bourrasques.

Chérinina se servait du joli diminutif "Ninette" pour nommer sa femme; elle, charmante, l'appelait simplement "petit mari" . . . .

C'était un couple merveilleusement assorti. Elle, jolie et lui bien; mais ce qui était encore mieux, c'est que leurs âmes communiaient sans cesse, aussi bien dans le bonheur que dans le malheur.

Ils s'aimaient d'amour, et aussi d'une douce et solide amitié, l'imité; cet attachement mutuel nécessaire, plus grand que l'amour, qui ne peut subsister sans son aide.—Ils étaient donc amants et amis, vivant en partageant les mêmes idées, les mêmes occupations, les mêmes distractions. Un chien de la race du Mont St. Bernard, était resté avec eux pour garder les coupes de bois.

Tout marcha à souhait les premiers temps. Régulièrement, ils recevaient tous les deux jours des vivres que le père Jean, un vieux schlitteur dévoué, leur apportait avec les nouvelles d'en

bas. Bien qu'ils fussent isolés, ils ne s'ennuyaient point; pour eux, être seuls était presque un bonheur.

Ils étaient, d'ailleurs, suffisamment instruits et éprouvaient de la joie en lisant de bons auteurs, car ils savaient les apprécier. Les passe-temps ne leur manquaient donc pas, ayant eu le soin de se munir de livres en quantité suffisante. Quand ils voulaient jouir des chefs-d'œuvres des grands maîtres, ils le faisaient en commun, d'une façon charmante. Régina s'asseyait gentiment à côté d'Edmond, la tête appuyée sur son épaule, et l'écoutait lire religieusement, presque avec extase. Alors, la voix mâle d'Edmond n'était guère troublée, pendant de longues heures; pourtant, Régina ne pouvait s'empêcher de donner de temps à autres un baiser à son mari, tant elle était heureuse.

Cependant, la neige fit son apparition, modifiant graduellement, en tombant, l'aspect des choses.

Et d'abord, ce fut une joie pour Régina, qui en admira la blancheur; mutine, elle se surprit même quelquefois à confectionner des boulettes, pour les jeter gracieusement à son mari, en riant aux éclats.

Pourtant, bientôt, il fallut déchanter. Depuis huit jours, la neige tombait sans interruption, bien qu'on leur ait affirmé que cela ne durerait jamais plus de deux ou trois jours. Les routes étaient certainement devenues impraticables, car ils n'avaient point eu, comme d'ordinaire, la visite du vieux schlitteur. Edmond s'inquiétait mais restait gai quand même, voulant donner du courage à sa femme, qu'il ne pouvait cependant tromper, car elle lisait clairement en lui et pensait avec lui.



Rapidement, la neige fit disparaître sous ses épaisses couches, le rez-de-chaussée de la maison, il fallut monter au premier étage pour y voir. Les provisions fraîches étaient complètement épuisées, Edmond et sa femme durent entamer les conserves. Mais, la neige continuant toujours son œuvre d'enfouissement, les conserves mêmes manquèrent bientôt. Alors, ce fut l'atroce faim. La faim qui, tiraillant l'estomac des deux jeunes gens, leur fit crier les entrailles et claquer des dents.

Un matin, alors qu'ils avaient passé une nuit à souffrir atrocement, tous deux assis au coin du feu, le chien entra, les yeux fous et flamboyants, se battant les flancs avec sa queue. Sa gueule, grande ouverte et pleine de bave, laissait à découvert ses énormes crocs.

Lentement et menaçant, il s'avancait presque en rampant, vers ses maîtres, qu'il semblait ne plus connaître. Plus de doute, il était atteint d'hydrophobie.

Epouvantée, Régina pâle, défaite, s'était jetée dans les bras de son mari. Edmond ne perdit point la tête, d'un coup de pied, il envoya rouler son sabot près de l'animal, qui, s'en emparant, le mordit avec rage; cela laissa le temps à Chérinina d'armer le revolver qu'il portait constamment à sa ceinture. D'un seul coup de feu, il abattit la bête qui se tordit dans des convulsions horribles avant de mourir. Vite, Edmond l'enterra dans la neige, afin de ne pas

avoir la tentation d'en dévorer la chair.

Cette situation ne pouvait durer, Chérinina prit une résolution énergique; mais, avant même qu'il ait eu le temps de la formuler, Régina l'avait comprise:

— "Essayons, dit-elle, et à la grâce de Dieu!"

Et tous deux, se tenant par la main, après s'être équipés, s'engagèrent dans la neige afin de gagner le bas de la montagne.

Quelques jours après ces événements, la neige ayant cessé de tomber, et même commencé à fondre, une équipe de sauveteurs, sous la direction du vieux schlitteur, partit au secours des époux Chérinina.

Après bien des fatigues et des recherches, et aussi après avoir visité leur maison, qu'ils trouvèrent naturellement vide, ils finirent par découvrir leurs corps raidis par la mort. Dans un blanc linceul de neige, Edmond et Régina étaient enlacés, leurs lèvres unies faisaient comprendre qu'ils étaient morts en se donnant un dernier baiser.

Actuellement, on peut voir encore, sur la côte orientale de la montagne, une grande croix de bois portant cette inscription:

"Passant prie pour ceux qui périrent à cette place!"

Edmond et Régina furent enterrés à cet endroit, ils s'aimèrent d'un amour sans nuages, d'un amour "Aere perennius."



P. S.: The girl who walks up Fifth Avenue, with her eyes fixed with stern firmness upon the horizon is wishing it was not considered unladylike to flirt.



PESSIMIST: the partner of an optimist.





# THE POPULAR PLAY

By George Jean Nathan

THAT the popular play is by sound standards ninety-nine times in one hundred a bad play is a scandal long since interred in the P's under platitude. But, save for the occasional vague theorizing of the theatrical anchorites who pass for authorities on the drama in the one-building universities, the reasons for the automatic badness of the popular play are rarely inquired into. And when these reasons are inquired into, they are invariably either jocosely diverted with some such observation as that the popular play must reflect the intellectual sophistication of a public forty-nine out of fifty of whose individuals believe that a cinder may be removed from one eye by massaging the other, or suffocated with some such collegiate pastille as "Even the most cultured and intellectual of men when he forms an atom of a crowd loses consciousness of his acquired mental qualities and harks back to his primal nakedness of mind; the dramatist, therefore, because he writes for a crowd, writes for an uncivilized and uncultivated mind."

Each of these amiable attitudes and the characteristic and reminiscential train of reasoning it produces is alike false in that it is based upon the assumption that intellectuality and meritorious drama go hand in hand and that the popular play must be a bad play since it is fashioned to appeal to a crowd mechanically or otherwise bereft of intellectuality. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. In the first place, there is generally no more intellectual content in the first-rate play than in the hack play designed for the mob. The basic philosophy of

Ibsen's "The Master Builder" is indistinguishable from that of Madeleine Lucette Ryley's "Mice and Men," precisely as the basic philosophy of Sudermann's "Happiness in a Corner" is indistinguishable from that of Fred Jackson's "The Naughty Wife." Cosmo Hamilton's yokel-yanker, "The Blindness of Virtue," is intrinsically of an intellectual piece with Wedekind's first-rate "Awakening of Spring," and Hemmerde and Neilson's rabble tickler, "The Butterfly on the Wheel," is of the same fundamental metaphysic as Björnson's "Geography and Love."

Again, such first-rate plays as Hauptmann's "The Weavers" and Galsworthy's "Strife," both prompt popular failures, are of so intellectually simple a nature that they are within the grasp of even the most feeble mob intelligence, whereas such specious, defective plays, and plays promptly popular, as Augustus Thomas' "Witching Hour" and Belasco's "Return of Peter Grimm" are built upon themes like mental suggestion and the domination of the subconscious that assuredly would seem to be mob caviare. Brieux's "Les Hanneçons," Pinero's "Thunderbolt," Echégaray's "El Gran Galeoto" and any number of other first-rate distinctly unpopular plays are intrinsically of a psychodynamic content not nearly so difficult of agglomerate digestion as Locke's "Case of Becky," Thomas "As a Man Thinks" and any number of other sixth-rate distinctly popular plays.

Still again, a first-rate play like Galsworthy's "Justice," written by an artist with the mob far from mind, becomes a popular play where a tenth-rate play



like Megrue's and Cobb's "Under Sentence," frankly written by Broadway for Broadway, and retailing the same theme as the Galsworthy work, becomes an unpopular play. Björnson's "The Gauntlet," listed by the professors as an unpopular play because of its so-called intellectuality, remains still an unpopular play when this so-called intellectuality is reduced to terms of Times Square by Rachel Crothers in "A Man's World." So, too, with Tolstoi's "Living Corpse" when made into the more transpicuous Ditrichstein version of the "Temperamental Journey," with Björnson's "Leonarda" when reduced to Kellett Chambers' "The Right to Happiness," with Brioux's "La Foi" and Moody's "The Faith Healer" when reduced to George Cohan's "The Miracle Man," with Hervieu's "La Loi de l'Homme" and Geraldine Bonner's "Sauce for the Goose," with Ibsen's "Pillars of Society" and Hurlbut's "The Writing on the Wall," with Hauptmann's "Lonely Lives" and Eugene Walter's "Just a Wife," with Strindberg's "Father" and Paul Armstrong's "Bludgeon." . . .

Out of this topsy-turvy it would appear to be no summer job to deduce the badness of the popular play on grounds of absence or even subordinacy of intellectuality. And so we turn for proof to the professorial theory that the popular play is a bad play since it is written for the mob, and since the mob lowers automatically the intelligence of its component individuals. Here, for all the sonorous eloquence of the university Dupins, we find ourselves afresh confounded. The Le Bon and Tarde notion, gobbled whole by the jerkwater Solomons, to the effect that the collective psychology of the crowd is instrumental in reducing the intelligence and poise of that crowd to the lowest common denominator is more often anything but true. While it may be true of a crowd in a gin-mill or circus sideshow, or of a crowd at a prize-fight or dinner party or dance, it is worse than imbecile to hold it true of a crowd in the theater or in an art gallery or at

a symphony concert. Take the lowest type of crowd imaginable, the type in which there is not more than one half-civilized man to every hundred, the crowd, for example, at a professional baseball game, and bundle that crowd bag and baggage into some great Carnegie Hall where they are playing Beethoven's Fifth. What would happen? At first, undoubtedly, a great deal of loud snickering and oh sassafras and bandying of sour *mots* and let's get the hell out o' this morgue. And what then? A slowly settling mass, a crowd gradually—very gradually perhaps—accommodating itself to its accursed surroundings, a crowd gradually shaming itself up to the conduct of its more genteel and more cultured and more disciplined component parts—and a crowd listening at length, if, true enough, not entirely with interest and sympathy, at least with open mind and in respectful silence.

Such a mob, instead of being lowered to its average indecorum and stupidity, as the professors maintain, is rather elevated in varying degree to its leaven of gentility and intelligence. The intelligent man in a crowd retains his intelligence and the yahoo in the same crowd becomes more or less uncomfortably inoculated with that man's intelligence. Take a first-rate play like Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra." Fill the house with twelve intelligent men and twelve hundred doodles. When the twelve hundred doodles boo, do the twelve intelligent men boo, or feel like booing? But when the twelve intelligent men applaud, is it not a fact that the twelve hundred doodles, even if they fail to join in or fail to feel like joining in, yet become inwardly just a trifle dubious as to their own apathy? And does not the applause of the lonely dozen put the twelve hundred doodles willy-nilly in a slightly more hospitable attitude toward the piece?

But here, I admit, I am guilty of giving the toe to one theory with what after all is merely another theory. So let us try facts. One will be sufficient. The notion of the professors that a



theatrical crowd is, like a street-corner gathering, ever a mere casual crowd, and that it may so be used as a stable and unchanging specimen in psychological research, is based on the perfectly obvious delusion that the crowds that go to the forty-odd New York theaters of an evening are entirely different and distinct crowds on each succeeding evening of the season. The opposite is, of course, true. The theatrical crowd of New York, and of any other city, big or small, is to a preponderant degree a fixed and sharply defined crowd, a crowd that has been going to the theater for a variable number of years, a crowd gradually finding its tastes polished by its better element, and so presently being graduated from the slapstick farce of "Charley's Aunt" to the satiric farce of de Caillavet and de Flers' "The King," from the tin piano "Earl and the Girl" to the melodious "Merry Widow," from the stodgy slop of Charles Klein to the humour of Clare Kummer and the wit of Jesse Lynch Williams. The dramatist, therefore, because he writes for this crowd, does not necessarily write, as the professors imagine, for a fitfully heterogeneous auditorium mind, crude, untrained and refractory. Hence, since the writers of the popular plays do not, anyway, agree with the professors as to the mediocrity of the crowd's intellectual attainments, and since they conscientiously write the very best plays they know to write, the reason for the automatic badness of the popular play is not to be found here. Where then? Very simply, I daresay, in the automatic badness of the theater itself. The theater, that is, as potential bazaar of art.

To the devastating whims of the theater the first-rate play and the tenth-rate play are equally subject; and if the former play suffers less and less often than the latter play it is simply because its creator happens by nature and instinct to be stubborn and independent artist where the creator of the bad play happens either constitutionally or by an acquired mental cheapness to be

a conscious or unconscious seeker after mere clap and coin. But, as dramatists pure and simple, as workers for the stage, the Gerhart Hauptmanns and the Eugene Walters are handicapped by the same arbitrary theatrical shortcomings and idiosyncrasies which the illuminated platform imposes upon them. The theory that the Hauptmanns, unlike the Walters, write their plays with the acting stage far from mind is akin to the theory that Ibsen unintentionally revolutionized dramatic, which is to say stage, technic by intentionally writing his plays primarily for the library.

Against these crude impositions and impostures of the stage the artist fights more sturdily and sagaciously than the hack, and his play is hence most often a play not so unavoidably bad. Bad, that is, from the viewpoint of a sound and complete work of art: in comparison, for example, with a sound novel, a sound painting, or a sound piece of music. Where the novelist, the painter or the composer faces one rule, the dramatist faces a dozen, eight of which are extrinsic to his art, and all of which are at best half-crazy. In order to achieve the essential theatrical unbroken leg-work on the part of his actors, Shakespeare had to stoop in his greatest tragedy to the baldest of bald stage artifices. Barrie, after he had finished "Peter Pan," had arbitrarily to tinker with the perfectly imagined scene of his well-planned and well-executed second act in order to make it stageworthy. For the one uncompromising Hauptmann of "Lonely Lives," there are the two stage compromising Hauptmanns of "Griselda" and "Elga." Brieux writes "La Foi" to the full of his imagination and then is forced to pull in his reins with a malapropos jerk that the work may be made playable. Imagine cutting three-quarters of an hour out of the reading of Conrad's novel "Lord Jim," as they must out of the playing of Ibsen's "Wild Duck" to fit it into the stage scheme of things. Imagine a stage which inexorably makes Shaw chop out the best part of his "Man and Superman."



The artist, of course, fights tooth and nail against the stage's stupid ritual and though that ritual, for all his valour, generally gets him one way or another in the end, his crucified play remains yet a variably good play for the simple reason that, unlike the mere gack merchant, he has declined to surrender to the egregious ritual without something of a scrap. But, even so, the pugnacious spirit of the artist-dramatist very often presently dies, and he realizes the futility of the fight, and hoists a white flag marked but slightly, for personal respect's sake, with the purple of his art. Thus, a Pinero surrenders with a "Mind-the-Paint Girl," a Galsworthy with a "Fugitive," a Brieux with a "Damaged Goods." . . .

The frankly popular playwright, on the other hand, hoists the milk-white flag immediately he gets on his uniform and before he can see, even remotely, the whites of the enemy's eggs. He declines to take any chances whatever. He appreciates, and accurately, that the law of the theater and its stage demands that he commit a thousand and one artistic incongruities and absurdities like emotionalizing a composition generically and properly unemotional, like making active an essentially passive picture, and like inculcating the character of a drone with a quick, suspenseful interest, and so he goes ahead and without further ado commits them. He has amiably learned his lesson, not out of his own experience, but out of the experiences of superior artists and craftsmen. He has seen that the difference between art and the drama is the difference between "Vanity Fair," the novel, on the one side, and "Vanity Fair," the dramatized novel, on the other—even where the dramatization is the work of a playwright, himself an artist, like Langdon Mitchell. . . . Conrad's "Youth" is a work of art. Is a playable play, treating of the same subject and treated even with the same great artistry, conceivable?

The popular play, therefore, is generally a bad play for the same reason that the music that emanates from a

mouth-harmonica is bad music. The medium of expression, however good the intentions of the performer, is too primitive, too greatly curtailed, too insufficient. The drama, good or bad, is an art in handcuffs. And the degree in which it differs is merely the degree in which the wrists of its creator are limber. But, good or bad, it is an art bounded by the same cramping and grotesque frontiers, on this side by some such proscription as Professor Aristotle's artistically ironic unities, on that by some such coop as the peremptory drop-curtain, on this again by objective action and on that again by over-emphasis of so-called "plot." That a Shakespeare has with high success flouted certain of these many baroque limbos and that a Tchekoff has with moderate success flouted certain others is contention of a kidney with that which maintains a jail to be an institution designed for the escape of its inmates on the ground that once in a blue moon some virtuoso of the can-opener composes for himself an exit.

## II

"THE Actor-Manager's requirements," observes Mr. P. P. Howe, "are that he shall be a bright, shrewd man of the world, about fifty, with a third act in which to decide the destinies of several persons, a fourth act in which to lay siege successfully to a younger heart that has long held out against him—although how it has succeeded so long in holding out against his masterful charm remains a mystery—and a free permission throughout all four acts to tell the story of his life, whenever it may seem to him to be apposite." These requirements of Mr. Actor-Manager Henry Miller are once again duly met in the instance of Louis Evan Shipman's play, "The Fountain of Youth." In this *divertissement* the Actor-Manager, his temples duly talcumed and his lapel duly gardenia'd, once more permits himself the Actor-Manager's luxury of hiring a play manuscript and a corps of performers periodically to assure him, when with



wistful mien he laments he is not so young as once he was, that he is absolutely wrong and that he is really not half so old as he imagines himself—to say nothing of such further *amours propres* as flooring the rest of the cast with the playwright's most acute *mots*, addressing the moon with the playwright's sweetest sentimental lines and beating out the handsome *jeune premier* (whom the author has astutely made a bonehead) for the affections of the delectable ingénue.

These, of course, are diversions harmless enough, and many another actor-manager before Mr. Miller has basked in similar automatic sunshines, but they offer substance obviously less for dramatic criticism than for speculations on the amazing *naïveté* of even the better grade of actor.

### III

AFTER the third act of the première of his military melodrama, "An American Ace," Mr. Lincoln J. Carter came out before the curtain in a spirited suit of evening clothes, grandly motioned the audience to still its applause, and said: "This war is a serious, not a farcial, business!"

Whatever the somewhat *malato* word farcial may mean, it vividly describes Professor Carter's play. This latter is distinctly, eminently and incontrovertibly a farcial opus. In characterization, dialogue and technical maneuvering it may be said without exaggeration to be farcially superior to the best of Hauptmann, Pinero, Galsworthy or Shaw. From the brilliant farcialine nature of its great spectacular military parade in which a vast army of eleven supers marches farcially past thousands of onlookers painted on the backdrop, to the dazzling farcial depiction of a battle between two six-inch aeroplanes hung on wires and dangled in front of strips of cheesecloth painted brown and lavender to represent clouds, the drama is of a superb farcialness, a truly bewildering farciality. The commander of the American fighting forces in Belgium

who, though the Hun is only a few miles away and rapidly approaching, nonchalantly spends all his time snooping around after a houri who is suspected of being a spy, is a piece of character drawing not less farcially dexterous than the heroic second-lieutenant who seems to be in complete charge of all the military operations at the front. But, though Professor Carter's farcialableness amounts in the present instance to something closely akin to farcialique genius, one can't but regret the apparent passing of the more simple and ingenious Lincoln Carter of the early 1890's whose melodramas, along with Tourgée's "Fool's Errand," Henty's "Through the Sikh War" and slingshots made out of one's big sister's garters, made boyhood worth the living.

### IV

THE amateurish Mr. Hubert Osborne's "April," presented by Charles Hopkins, is our ancient *confidante*, the play that expounds the misery attaching to the possession of great riches. The "Century Grove" is the Messrs. Elliott, Comstock, Gest and Mears' entrance into competition with Mr. Ziegfeld in the matter of the so-called midnight roof show. The spectacle is nicely maneuvered, brilliantly coloured, and offers a decidedly attractive hour's diversion. "Fancy Free" brings the pretty Miss Marilynn Miller back to the metropolitan music show stage and is hence more than inviting to the connoisseur. "Hearts of the World" is Professor D. W. Griffith's latest effort to lift the motion picture out of the æsthetic gutter. The battle scenes, taken on the European fighting front, are interesting, but the story portion of the film is of the accepted cinema puerility. The photography is generally good. The picture in its entirety, however, further convinces one that the art of the film, when devoted to other than portrayals of actual events, is an art primarily for small children between the ages of ten and sixty-five.



In the Belmont Theater, until recently, one Carter the Great, a fellow of magic. The most amazing of the eminent professor's tricks, on the night I eyed him, was the detection, via his blindfolded, telepathic spouse, of a copy of my confrère Mencken's latest book in the possession of a party in Row M. Like many another scoffing ass, I had always believed the ability of these blindfolded ladies to name the initials on the penknives, watches and suspenders of the audience was merely a matter of getting clues to the initials through some such subtle remonstrance on the part of the professor as "O G B quick!" or "Y R U hesitating?" But I no longer elevate the old superior nose and eject the old sapient snicker. Anyone able to find a member of a New York first-night theatrical audience reading a book by Mencken must possess the authentic occult gift.

## V

It would seem to be the ineradicable Nazimova idea that the best way to play Ibsen is to play him, from first to last, as if he were a cross between Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and a czardas. In pursuance of this theory, one again observes the Madame, in the recent Arthur Hopkins Norwegian season, interpreting the rôle of Hedda Gabler mainly with the hips. By reason of the consequent pelvic vibrations and accompanying ocular and labial didoes, Hedda in the Nazimova incarnation becomes a mere brunette Eddie Foy.

A play by Mr. Charles Rann Kennedy possesses all the attributes of castor oil save its cathartic virtue. This Charles is one who would purge the cosmos of its evils on the customary royalty basis of 5, 7½ and 10. To the negotiation of this mission he brings a technique that consists primarily in causing actors in false whiskers to declaim polysyllabic platitudes in a dim light. The latest uplift effort of the gentleman, hight "The Army With Banners," is a somewhat inscrutable epic on religious faith, and perhaps may best be described as the kind of play

Dr. Parkhurst might compose were he sufficiently encouraged.

Five minutes after the rise of the curtain on the Messrs. Eugene Walter's and Crownin Wilson's play "Nancy Lee," the name part seizes stage centre and proclaims that the woman who sells herself matrimonially for money is no better than a prostitute. After a while, another female character balances herself against the pianola and indignantly exclaims that woman in this world has to abide by cruel man-made laws. Somehow, this is all I can think of to say about "Nancy Lee."

## VI

THE outstanding and distinguishing virtue of Henri Lavedan's "Service" is that, unlike most Gallic drama of its kind, it refrains from the rubber-stamp legislation of patriotism in terms of cuckoldom. For additional virtues, however, I have plumbed in vain. The local critical acceptance of the play as a more or less important work of art is doubtless due to the common local misconception as to the eminence of its author in the dramatic craft of his native land and the consequent taking for granted of capacities actually inexistent, to say nothing of the current entirely praiseworthy, if critically infatuated, inclination to believe it a part of duty to sight æsthetic merit in all patriotic themes however ill those themes happen to be maneuvered. Lavedan's play, in plain fact, is a sincerely conceived but crudely executed play, often over-written to the point of the mock heroic and always deficient in that quality of ringing simplicity essential to its full and proper eloquence. The swollen ineptitude of the drama is heightened in the local presentation by the extraordinarily bad acting vouchsafed it by Mrs. Fiske and her supporting company. The performance of Mrs. Fiske in the rôle of the pacifist mother is still another testimonial to the absurd over-rating of the lady as an actress above the third grade; and the performances of Mr. Lee Baker, as the



militant father, and of Mr. George Flateau, as the pacifist son, are of the very first Bramhall Playhouse order. The staging of the play is of the sort in which the military brass band marching in the street below apparently includes a couple of violins and a piano, and in which, following the local ritual, a French mother never under any circumstance kisses her children, or is kissed by her children, save on the cheek.

"Service" is preceded by Dunsany's admirable one-act play, "A Night at an Inn." The effect of the play is, however, considerably nullified by acting as poor and staging as maladroit as that visited upon the Lavedan work.

## VII

AND NOW—

## VIII

THE ten best full-length plays written in English and presented during the season of 1917-1918, though not necessarily in the order of their merit. Plays hitherto disclosed on the New York stage have not been considered in the compilation.

"The King," by de Caillavet, de Flers and Arène.

"Misalliance," by George Bernard Shaw.

"Over the 'Phone," by Irmé Földes.

"The Deluge," by Hennig Berger.

"Seventeen," by Booth Tarkington, Stannard Mears and Hugh Stange.

"Madame Sand," by Philip Moeller.

"Why Marry?" by Jesse Lynch Williams.

"The Torches," by Henri Bataille.

"Josephine," by Hermann Bahr (even though miserably botched by the adaptor).

"The Family Exit," by Lawrence Langner.

## IX

THE ten most interesting performances among the unstarred and unfeatured women players, in the order of merit:

1. Lenore Ulrich, in "Tiger Rose."

2. Vera Gordon, in "The Land of the Free."
3. Madeline Delmar, in "The Heritage."
4. Pauline Lord, in "The Deluge."
5. Amy Ricard, in "The Torches."
6. Helen Westley, in "The Critic's Comedy."
7. Suzanne Bing, in "The New Idol."
8. Emilie Polini, in "Yes or No."
9. Jane Grey, in "De Luxe Annie."
10. { Jeanne Eagles, in "Hamilton."  
Alethea Luce, in "The Family Exit."

## X

THE ten most interesting performances among the unstarred and unfeatured male players, in the order of merit:

1. Lionel Atwill, in "The Wild Duck," "Hedda Gabler," "The Indestructible Wife" and "L'Élévation."
2. Louis Jouvet, in "Les Fourberies de Scapin."
3. Maclyn Arbuckle, in "Misalliance."
4. François Gournac, in "La Carosse du Saint Sacrement."
5. Henry Kolker, in "Over the 'Phone."
6. Robert Fischer, in "Polly With a Past."
7. Raymond Bloomer, in "The Squab Farm."
8. Ferdinand Gottschalk, in "Madame Sand."
9. Alfred Lunt, in "Romance and Arabella."
10. Roland Young, in "The Gypsy Trail."

## XI

THESE lists, plainly enough, are but the vapourings of personal taste and prejudice. For them, and for the probably bizarre materializations they may seem to have conjured up, I offer extenuation and apology no more than for my inscrutable predilection, in other directions, for a slice of banana in my cocktail, for some of Lenepveu's music, for Max Beerbohm's sentiment, and for sleeping on the floor.



# HARK, HARK, THE LARK!

By H. L. Mencken

## I

**I**N my early days, as *Candidatus Theologiae*, I toured the houses of worship east of the Ohio River, observing the variations in the mummerly on display and studying the technic of the rev. gentlemen of God. One Sunday morning in Union Hill, N. J., I especially remember. The mosque was of the Baptist denomination and the divine put up to preach was a fellow with a huge black moustache and a bray like a chautauquan. For an hour and twenty minutes he screamed and yammered at the assembled partisans of total immersion, beseeching them in a voice of brass to give up their carnalities and lead lives of decency. Finally, worked up to the heat of an electric arc, he shot out his arms in one last ear-bumping appeal—lost his balance, pitched out of the hortatory pen, cracked his head on the chancel-rail, and had to be hauled out by the deacons. And then, just as he disappeared into the vestry-room, and the windows ceased to rattle, and the worshippers took the chewing-gum out of their ears, and the happy damned in the beer-hall across the street resumed their naps—just then the organist struck the tonic chord of C major, and a pretty girl in the choir, her voice fresh and lovely, launched tremulously into "There is a Green Hill Far Away." . . .

Years passed. Unfrocked, I had gone over to the devil, and was witnessing a lewd show in one of the principal theatres of New York—what is called a "girl show," more legs than rhyme or reason. Above the legs wobbled 30 or more head of women—fat, greasy, disgusting creatures; professional hus-

sies and exhibitionists; some of them famous bawds of the town; all hideously bedaubed and bewigged; the best of them no more appetizing, even to a Methodist, than a boiled cocktail. Suddenly, a turn coming in the tune, the whole herd of bare and dirty gals wriggled up-stage, and there emerged from the left-hand wing—I can see her yet, oh joy!—a young and pretty girl. Yea, a young and pretty girl, and in a simple little frock, and with the arch and challenging smile of seventeen. God knows how she got there: I merely tell you what I saw. Maybe she was the daughter of the manager. Maybe the manager was her second husband. Maybe she had killed someone, or walked down Wall street on a dull afternoon. But whatever her origins, there she was—and in the face of her blooming young beauty, her half-childish clumsiness, all those frescoed and oscillating harridans behind her faded into a sort of obscene background, like a hog-pen behind a barn-yard daisy, and I sat drinking her in in a sort of haze, and when she tripped off I left the place, pulling the nose of the door-keeper on my way out, and resolving to lead a better life. . . .

Such withering memories now float in my mind. They are brought out of the limbo of forgetfulness, not by senile cachexia, not by the pangs of amour, not by the horrors of war, not by the fear of hell, but by a glance through the "Airs and Ballads" of John McClure (*Knopf*), a young poet of Oklahoma. What I find in these modest airs and ballads is what the late Elijah found in his still, small voice: an assurance and a criticism—the first that the making of songs is yet a living art among



us, yet young, yet adroit, above all, yet natural and innocent; the second a blistering disposal of those posturers and anatomizers who would turn it into some profound hocus-pocus, some abysmal literary legerdemain, comprehensible only to a select camorra of blue stockings. In brief, McClure is the born poet, the poet first and last, the poet full-fledged from the start, as opposed to all your stock company of sweating poetizers. His simple and perfect songs are to the tortured contraptions of the self-consecrated messiahs of prosody, with their ding-dong repetitions, their chopped-off lines, their cheap shocks, their banal theorizings, their idiotic fustian—these songs of his are to such tedious gabblings as the sonorous lines of Swinburne were to the cacophonous splutters of Browning, the poet of pedagogues and old maids, male and female. What we have here is the Schubert complex—the whole pack of professors and polyphonists routed by a shepherd playing a pipe.

I am not going to quote any specimens. Two-thirds of the stuff in the book has been printed, during the past two or three years, in this esteemed gazette, chiefly at the bottoms of pages. Perhaps you have overlooked it—or read it and not noted it. Enter one more demerit to the account of the Revival of Poetry: it has revived, among other nonsense, the notion that poetry is to be measured with a yard-stick, that the beautiful is indistinguishable from the windy, that "Who is Sylvia" stands below "The Ring and the Book." Poe drove a salient into that fallacy of dolts nearly a century ago; it remains for some critic of tomorrow to enter the old breach and widen it. If I were younger I should go into training for the business myself; as it is, I have other fish to fry. Meanwhile, I advise you to lay in a copy of this "Airs and Ballads" book, and to give your particular eye to "Elf's Song," "Home," "Chanson Naïve," "I Am Aweary," "The Celts," "The Wake"—but let the catalogue end. Some soft spots are in it, of course—some flat notes, some

false ones, some too shrill ones. The poet sports a bit with *vers libre*. Now and then he is horribly young. But what other American in all these years has done a first book that has more of fine music in it, and sound craft, and honest love of beauty?

## II

SURELY there is nothing else so striking in the current crop, but of respectable poetry there is a plenty, and to please all palates. The naïf and charming "Love Songs" of Sara Teasdale (*Macmillan*) are as far as possible from the "Lustra" of Ezra Pound (*Knopf*), and yet both are of very high merit. Miss Teasdale's ideas are of the simplest; her forms are of the simplest; her emotions are of the simplest: her very words are of the simplest. But for all that austerity she gets music and color into her stanzas; they never fail to reach their effects. Pound stands at the other pole, as poet and as mammal. He is lavishly cerebral; a fellow of extremely artful fancies; full of learning, and no less of wit; eternally ingenious and self-possessed; an anatomist of emotion rather than an emotionalist. Few poets are written about more copiously, or more stupidly. On the one hand he is mistaken for an empty concocter of *vers libre* out of the Brevoort basement; on the other hand he is hymned absurdly as a poetical "red blood," an apostle of the virile, a crusader against the International Sunday-school Lessons. In "Lustra" he makes a pathetic protest against the latter imbecility; the former is floored in a small anonymous *gemara*, "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry," the author of which, so my spies in London report, is Lord Bryce. The truth about this curious Philadelphian (long since escaped from that intellectual Devil's Island) is that he is a sort of mixture of Benvenuto Cellini and Lorenzo de Medici, reduced to the small scale of written lines—a discoverer and amasser of strange beauties, a highly sophisticated connoisseur, and at the



same time a bold and resourceful artist. In one aspect he seems a mere collector of startling exotics; in another aspect he seems homely and prosaic. Both views of him may be defended. The clue to the disparity lies in his extraordinary mental agility, the breadth of his information, his unending daring and originality. No more fantastic fish disports in the pool of prosody.

"Lustra" is a sort of anthology of his work, and includes things in all of his divergent manners. There are simple songs; there are blistering epigrams in verse; there are polemical pieces; there are experiments in rhythm; there are translations from the Chinese, the French, the Provençal, the Italian, the German and the Chinese. Some of the Chinese poems exhibit the author at his best. The raw materials come from the collections of the late Ernest Fenollosa, but Pound has done a great deal more than break them to metre. What he has done is to create a Chinese spirit and get it into the English forms. Whether that spirit is authentic or not I don't know, but its pull and appeal are undoubtedly there, and so the feat remains. My spies aforesaid inform me that parts of "Lustra," here printed, have been suppressed by the English Comstocks—on what ground, I can't make out. I see nothing pornographic in the book, nor in Pound. He is surely too humorous a man to waste himself upon any such effort to shock the peasantry. On some later day I hope to discourse upon him at greater length. He is one of the few living American authors with anything worth hearing to say.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, with his "Collected Poems" running to 552 closely printed pages (*Macmillan*), begins to take on the garrulous dignity of a favorite family poet. The same ideas serve him over and over again. He is one who, like Noyes, arose with promise, and then sank into a sea of words. There are suggestions of an overdose, too, in Witter Bynner's "Grenstone Poems" (*Stokes*), but relief and excuse are present in the form of some capital

lyrics. The same author's "Ode to Harvard" (*Stokes*) is unashamed sentimentality. One imagines the poet moored to a bar-rail, pouring his filial recollections into the ear of a polite bartender. But this Bynner, as I say, has a deft hand for the lyre, and can pluck pretty songs from its strings. His "Ode to Harvard," if it serves no other purpose, at least purges him of Harvardism, and so leaves none to corrupt his tunes of Arcady.

Various other presentable poets are in the vernal round-up: William Griffith with "City Pastorals and Other Poems" (*White*), James Weldon Johnson with "Fifty Years" (*Cornhill*), Conrad Aiken with "Nocturne of Remembered Spring" (*Four Seas*), Christopher Morley with "Songs for a Little House" (*Doran*), and Jessie B. Rittenhouse with "The Door of Dreams" (*Houghton*). Griffith's actual pastorals smell of the lamp; the very form itself is an affectation. But there is more spontaneity and a good deal more poetry in the later stretches of the book. Johnson is a man partly of colored blood, and some of the newspaper reviewers seem surprised that he doesn't do all his writing in the dialect of Al Jolson. The answer is that a man who can do things as good as "Girl of Fifteen" and "The Glory of the Day Was in Her Face" is a man whose race counts for nothing. These things are well done, and so are his translations and some of his longer pieces. With the banjo, an he would, he could probably top them all, as "Tunk" and "Answer to Prayer" well show. This colored *littérateur*, in brief, is a man of talent, and worth paying heed to.

Aiken, dropping his experiments in Freudian psychology, goes back to poetry in his book, and achieves some pieces that have a fine glow and are full of apt, arresting nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns and conjunctions. He is a poet convalescing from a messianic delusion, and deserves a welcome home. Morley sings placid songs—the joys of



wife and baby, of evenings at the fire-side, of washing dishes, even. Creditable stuff within its limits, but I have a fancy that this poet will shut off the rhapsodical tap before long and strike out in a different direction. He suffers currently from a sort of dual personality. One half of him is a capital wit, and the other half is an American right-thinker, branded at Garden City. The first half is infinitely more valuable to the national letters than the latter. It must be saved at all costs.

Edgar Lee Masters' new volume, "Toward the Gulf" (*Macmillan*), leaves me rather cold. All his usual capacity for plausible, ingratiating writing is there, but somehow the ideas seem to run thin, and there is a suggestion of straining and stuffing. A good many of these rhythmic tales, indeed, bear the air of having been forced into metre unwillingly. This is notably true of "Excluded Middle," one of the best of them otherwise. "Excluded Middle," in substance, is simply a short story in the manner of Sherwood Anderson, and I have a feeling that Anderson, or even Masters himself, could have done much more with it in prose. But for all these doubts, Masters still holds up in the one all-important department: he is never dull, even when he is least exhilarating. What stands behind his verse and quasi-verse is the charm of an unusual personality. The plain truth about him is that he is a better man than most of our poets—more intelligent, more thoughtful, more civilized. This is the chief explanation of his appeal. In "The Spoon River Anthology" he simply introduced the truth into American poetry—a savoury and memorable novelty, but probably highly deleterious to the poetry.

### III

THE anthology business, reflecting the general good times in poetry, seems to be paying excellent dividends of late in These States. So many launch into it, indeed, that it begins to radiate a faint essence of profiteering. My

*Ordnanz*, Emil, wheels in at least a dozen new anthologies, some very fat. Dr. George Herbert Clarke, a puller of sophomoric ears down in Tennessee, offers "A Treasury of War Poetry" (*Houghton*); the indefatigable Alfred Kreymborg presents his second collection of "the new verse," again under the title of "Others" (*Knopf*); some anonymous professor assembles a volume of "Georgian Poetry, 1916-1917" (*Putnam*); Sara Teasdale puts together a hundred love lyrics by women; the gifted Braithwaite blows up his annual "Anthology of Magazine Verse" (*Small-Maynard*) to 412 pages; his apprentice, Dr. Henry T. Schnittpf, sets up on his own with a book of college verse, "The Poets of the Future" (*Stratford*), and so on, and so on.

Dr. Braithwaite, as usual, offers a very entertaining volume, with many odd fancies in it and not a little genuine poetry. In his introduction he utters some obvious truths about the danger of wasting wind upon the mere forms of verse. What is more important, he says, is "the vital matter of substance, . . . of ideas and emotion." That is to say, what is important in a poem is the poetry, not the rhyme scheme, the metre or the capitalization. As I say, Dr. B. has got some very fair stuff into his collection, along with some mere fol-de-rol and flatulence. On what theory he holds "The Tree" by Harold Bullard, to be a work of art I can't make out. Or "Storm-Music," by Dr. Henry Van Dyke, an almost perfect specimen of professorial rhetoric. Or "The Coward," by Caroline Giltinan. Or "Feet," by Mary Carolyn Davies. And by what unfathomable process of mind does he put so stale a piece of tripe as "The Smithy of God," by Clement Wood, above "The Celts," by John McClure? The learned doctor, in fact, seems to have been napping when he read McClure; he will have to do some explaining, I opine, later on. But in general he has a sharp eye and is without prejudices. On the one hand he is awake to the continued ex-



cellence of Lizette Woodworth Reese, and on the other hand he is alert to espy such newcomers as David Morton and Leslie Nelson Jennings, both of whom will print books during the coming year—that is, unless *all* publishers are asses, which I doubt. The danger confronting Dr. Braithwaite is that of taking himself too heavily; already he begins to boom and snuffle like a Harvard professor. His ventures into criticism, at the end of his volume, are extraordinarily hollow. When one turns from them to his glib marshalling of all published poetry into three definite classes, like freshmen herded according to their chest expansions, one begins to harbor a disquieting doubt. In brief, a little less pomposity would be good for these annual collections.

The talented assayer's pupil, Dr. Schnittkind, makes an abominable mess of his anthology of college poets. It would have been bad enough without his introduction; with that introduction it descends to burlesque. Here is a specimen of Schnittkindish theory: "The reason why an apt figure of speech thrills us so strangely is because the poet, by means of this figure of speech, stretches an invisible thread of gold between our hearts and the heart of God." What have we here? The suburban rector school of criticism, art as a mellowed, the pious sob *über alles*—in a word, balderdash. It would be difficult to find any sillier cant in the *Nation*, or even among the literary editorials of the *New York Times*. Later on the devout *Privatdozent* explains to the Christian Endeavor Society how he selected the poems for his collection. They poured in upon him, he says, from all sides, and to the number of "several thousand." "Out of these," he goes on, "I picked out those that most forcibly brought home to me the truth that we continually meet God face to face."

Example of this encounter:

A king came out of his palace  
And a peasant out of his hut,  
And the king with a sudden sword stroke  
An ear from the peasant cut.

Another:

The miners blow the Reveille; it's for us  
to sound the Taps;  
But why in hell can't old Jawn D. fight  
out his own damn scraps?

The truth is that most of the verse so laboriously brought together by this infra-Braithwaite are jejune jingles—the sort of solemn doggerel that all of us write when we are young, and love virtuously, and read too much Kipling. There is even an ode to Alfred Noyes—a sober fact, though perhaps incredible! The best poem in the book is "Prayer," by Harold Cook, a poet so little needing discovery that he is already free of the magazines. Add "Fragment," by Sally Calkins Wood, of Wellesley, and all the genuine poetry in 320 pages has been named.

"Georgian Poetry, 1916-1917," is mainly conventional stuff, with a few concessions to the more moderate Leftists. There is nothing in it of unusual interest. "A Treasury of War Poetry" contains much that is already familiar, for example, Rupert Brooke's fine sonnets. The newer stuff is chiefly bad, and some of it is downright ridiculous. It is curious to note that the most bellicose hymns of hate come from soft, academic hands. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, for one, fairly makes the page flame with his Presbyterian heat, but all the poets who have actually risked their lives in the war are far less vociferous. The leap is far from these songs of strife to Sara Teasdale's "The Answering Voice" (*Houghton*), a collection, as I have said, of amorous strophes by lady bards, capitally chosen. Few anthologies show greater diligence or sounder discrimination. Miss Teasdale has unearthed many very excellent poems, old and new, and her collection is well put together. "Others" brings us to the Bolsheviki—and a new chapter.

#### IV

THE most advanced of these Great Thinkers, it would appear, is Walter Conrad Arensberg. I quote a characteristic confection:



Ing? Is it possible to mean ing?

Suppose

for the termination in *g*  
a disoriented  
series

of the simple fractures  
in sleep.  
Soporific

has according a value for soap  
so present to  
sew pieces.

And *p* says: Peace is.

And suppose the *i*

to be big in ing  
as Beginning

Then Ing is to ing

as aloud

accompanied by times

and the meaning is a possibility  
of ralsis

Four more such profound pieces appear in "Others," along with similar monkey-shines by William Carlos Williams, Editor Kreymborg, and Mina Loy, and some very fair poetry by Orrick Johns, Maxwell Bodenheim and others. Each of the revolutionists has his own peruna for all the ills of prosody. Kreymborg, following Vachel Lindsay, repeats inanities over and over again; Miss Loy wedges a couple of em-quads between adjoining words; Arensberg, as we have seen, reduces words to syllables and letters. Such are the fruits of the heavy brain work that goes on in Greenwich Village, between balls for the boobs and raids by the *gendarmérie*. Williams, beside appearing in "Others," prints a whole volume of his rhapsodies under the title of "Al Que Quiere!" (*Four Seas*), and announces on the cover that "the poets of the future will dig for material in it as the poets of today dig in Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass'." Let us grant the excavation—but I doubt that the bones unearthed will repay them for their labor. A few arch fancies are in it: "Danse Russe," for instance. But in the main its ideas are staler than the bard seems to suspect.

All the vers libristis run to explanations and expositions; from Amy Lowell down to the latest of Dr. Kreymborg's catches they unanimously emit theories. Harold W. Gammans prefixes a treatise on "rhythmus" to his "Com-

mon Men and Women" (*Four Seas*), arguing that it is neither prose nor verse, but "the highest form of one's natural expression." Wallace Gould prints a note in his "Children of the Sun" (*Cornhill*), warning aluminados to avoid mistaking his rhapsodies for poems. Vachel Lindsay inserts an essay on poem-games in the middle of "The Chinese Nightingale" (*Macmillan*). Jean de Bosschere's "The Closed Door," translated by J. S. Flint (*Lane*), has a copious introduction by May Sinclair. T. S. Eliot's "Prufrock" (*Egoist Press*), though it contains no actual preface, has been stormfully expounded in the public prints by Dr. Pound. And then, to cover them all, there is "A Study in English Metrics," by the late Adelaide Crapsey (*Knopf*), a work so profound that I'll have to read it before reviewing it, a job that there will be no time for until after the war.

Somewhat unwillingly, for I detest reformers, I find intriguing stuff in all these volumes, even including Dr. Gammans'. Eliot is extremely exhilarating; Bosschere is ingenious and full of color; Gould has his gaudy moments; Lindsay wins me with his title poem, though I still prefer the original Mother Goose to his poem-games. "The Chinese Nightingale," in truth, is a very adept and charming piece of work. There is some mere *héliogabalisme* in it, but there is also some poetry in it.

## V

A GENTLE drop and we are among the ineluctable piffle. Some of the worst of it is in three volumes of war poems: "The Little Flag on Main Street," by McLanburgh Wilson (*Macmillan*); "The Trench Lad," by Saxe Churchill Stimson (*Gorham*), and "With the Colors," by Everard Jack Appleton (*Stewart-Kidd*). What we have here is the sorriest sort of newspaper doggerel, almost wholly devoid of poetry. "Arma Virumque," by Robert Withington (*Hampshire Bookshop*), is mere childish drivel. So is "A



Christmas Poem," by Guy Brost (*Majority Co.*). So are the "Poems" of Leo Gregory (*Donohue*). In "A Cycle of Sonnets," by Edith Willis Linn (*White*), and in "From Dream to Dream," by the same author, I can find nothing save stiff platitudes. Nor in "Nort' Shor' Verses," by Richard D. Ware (*Luce*), a collection of bad verses in the Canuck dialect. Nor in "English B," by Agnes Porter (*Sherman-French*). Nor in "A Garden of Remembrance," by James Terry White (*White*), despite eloquent testimonials by Martha Foote Crow, "poetry adviser, department of literature and libraries, Federated Women's Clubs," and James B. Kenyon, Litt.D., "*littérateur* and well-known author of numerous volumes of verse and essays." Dr. Crow certifies that the exultations of Prof. White are "worthy to be read for Inspiration, and studied for Poetical Technique in Literary Classes and Clubs and by lovers of Poetry everywhere." Dr. Kenyon says that "there are numerous sweet and tender verses here, all of them informed with genuine lyrical fire." I offer a specimen of the inspiration, the technique, the sweetness, the tenderness and the fire:

When we so near each other sail  
And see the other's signal light,  
Must we miss one another's Hail,  
Like ships that pass in the night?

The originality of this conceit will also bemuse the illuminati, I make so bold as to daresay. An appetite for more of Dr. Kenyon's critical bulls is in me. My agents bring the news that he was formerly an ecclesiastic, occupying various pulpits of the Methodist rite from 1878 to 1906.

A great deal of passable verse rolls in every Spring, dull in general but with its touches of genuine feeling and beauty. I list a few typical collections: "Green Fruit," by Lieut. John Peale Bishop; "A Voice from the Silence," by Anna B. Bense; "Poems," by Carroll Aikins; "The Hill Trails," by Arthur Wallace Peach; "In Divers

Tones," by Clarence Watt Heazlitt; "Songs of the Heart and Soul," by Joseph Roland Piatt; "Vagrant Visions," by Edith Fargo Andrews (all *Sherman-French*); "The Divine Image," by Caroline Giltinan (*Cornhill*); "In the Paths of the Wind," by Glenn Ward Dresbach (*Four Seas*); "Sonnets of Sorrow and Triumph," by Ella Wheeler Wilson (*Doran*); "Sea Dogs and Men at Arms," by Jesse Edgar Middleton (*Putnam*); "The Final Star," by Marion Couthouy Smith (*White*); and so on. All these are earnest and worthy minnesingers, and most of them show a mild talent. What they chiefly lack is ideas. Mrs. Wilcox says all the conventional things about a widow's sorrow in a conventional way; Mrs. Giltinan is gracefully and correctly pious; Mr. Middleton imitates Kipling in the orthodox manner; the rest say their say respectably and sedately. Some of them are perennials. One of these, Mr. Dresbach, shows improvement; another, Mr. Peach, is standing still. Nearly all such poets print prefaces announcing that their stanzas have already appeared in certain great family periodicals, including *THE SMART SET*. A great deal of indifferent verse gets into the magazines, including *THE SMART SET*.

I could continue the catalogue until it was as long as your leg. Here, for example, are various attempts to put the wild life of remote regions into rhyme: "Old Christmas," by William Aspenwall Bradley (*Houghton*), and "Singing Carr," by the same author (*Knopf*), in which the folks depicted are the mountaineers of Kentucky; "Barbed Wire," by Edwin Ford Piper (*Midland*), "Early Days on the Western Range," by C. C. Walsh (*Sherman-French*), and "The Land Where the Sunsets Go," by Orville H. Leonard (*Sherman-French*), in which we invade the desert and cow country, and "Ginger Mick," by C. J. Dennis (*Lane*), in which the characters are Australians and the scene shifts from Gallipoli to Flanders. All creditable stuff, but none of it poetry.



**Apologies:**

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